PENNSYLVANIA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Testimony of the

Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA)

Public Hearing Regarding

Basic Education Funding

Presented to the

Basic Education Funding Commission

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By

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PSEA President

Good morning, Chair Phillips-Hill, Chair Sturla, and members of the Basic Education Funding Commission (Commission). My name is Aaron Chapin, and I am the President of the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA). With me today is Dr. Mark Price, PSEA's Director of Research for School Funding and Finance and Labor Economist. Thank you for inviting us to share PSEA's thoughts and recommendations on school funding and specifically, options for improving basic education funding and the current funding formula.

I want to begin by saying I empathize with the challenge you all have been tasked with fulfilling on this Commission. Pennsylvania is a diverse state with 500 very different school districts. As I observed you traverse the state on this tour, I thought back to my own journey through this Commonwealth. I grew up in Chester County attending Phoenixville and Owen J. Roberts School Districts. I've made my home in the Hazleton Area School District for 27 years. My wife is a teacher, and my daughter attends public school. I was a fourth and fifth grade teacher for 30 years at the Stroudsburg Area Middle School in Monroe County. And today, I sit before you as the president of PSEA, representing the interests of 1,000 locals in every corner of this Commonwealth, including right here in Bedford. The school districts that have played a role in my life and the lives of my family members are very different from each other – each having its own unique challenges and perspective on what is "fair funding." And I'm sure that you've had a similar experience and evolving perspectives based on your own experiences, where you've lived, the viewpoints of your constituents, and what you have learned in your role on this Commission.

Having been deeply engaged in the work of the original Commission, PSEA is proud of the adoption of the basic education funding formula (formula). Our organization has advocated for decades for the State to drive more funding to lower wealth districts to help close resource gaps with higher wealth districts. Maintaining the formula – and investing $2.3 billion of new funding through it since 2014 – are significant steps forward in this effort. Even if new investments have not been at the levels necessary to counter the inequities baked into Pennsylvania's overall system of funding public education, Pennsylvania has taken steps to address equitable school funding. On behalf of PSEA's 177,000 members, thank you for your continued efforts.

In 2014, PSEA – as many stakeholders did at the time – focused primarily on addressing disparities between districts based on income. Since then, however, indisputable evidence demonstrated that districts with more students of color received *less State aid* than districts in similar income groupings with mostly white students. It became clear to PSEA that we must focus on *both* income equity and racial equity in how our schools are funded – one is not a proxy "fix" for the other per se.

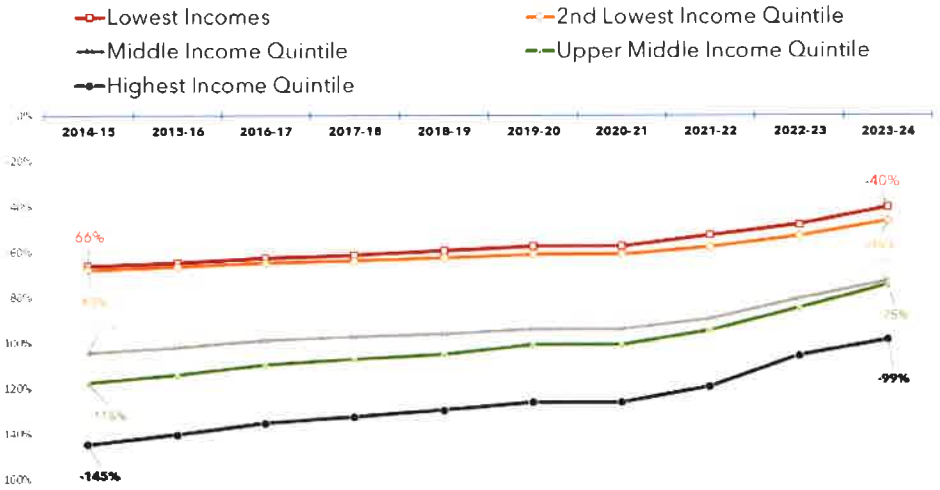
PSEA developed a Funding Equity Tool (Tool) to help provide a consistent and objective mechanism for determining whether funding proposals *reduce, increase, or maintain the status quo* of income and racial equity gaps in State aid[1] and in district spending[2]. To help better evaluate the relative wealth of school districts and where inequities reside, PSEA divided all school districts into income quintiles using the median household income from the Census Bureau. While this methodology differs slightly from that used by Dr. Matthew Kelly who testified before the Commission in September, it produces very similar results. PSEA also analyzed districts with an enrollment of 30 percent or more students of color (*hereinafter referred to as "BIPOC districts"*) to identify gaps with districts with more white students *(hereinafter referred to as "White districts")* within the same income quintile.

We present the findings of our internal analyses to demonstrate the progress Pennsylvania is making in addressing these gaps – while also acknowledging the reality that significant work is yet to be done.

First – the good news. The formula is working as policymakers and stakeholders intended. As the share of funding distributed via the formula continues to grow, the gaps in State aid narrow within each income quintile (Graph 1) and between BIPOC districts and White districts within each income grouping (Graph 2).

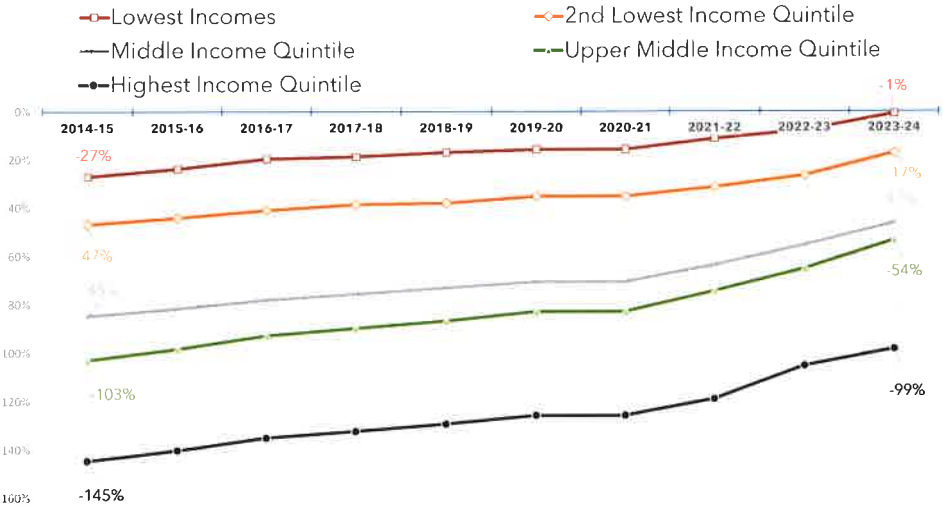
[1] Basic Education Funding per Student Weighted Average Daily Membership (BEF/SWADM).
[2] Spending includes instruction, support services, and operation of noninstructional services, minus certain expenditures: tuition payments to charter schools; facilities; and other expenditures and financing uses. The spend number is then divided by the SWADM for FY2023-24.

Graph 1.
The gap between low and high state aid districts has declined across all income groups each year that new state dollars have been added to the basic education funding subsidy by formula



Source: PSEA Research based on Pennsylvania Department of Education data

Graph 2.
The gap between BIPOC and white districts has declined across all income groups each year that new state dollars have been added to the basic education funding subsidy by formula



Source: PSEA Research based on Pennsylvania Department of Education data

Now for the bad news. When we analyzed school district expenditures (with charter tuition payments removed), **the 100 districts with the lowest incomes spend *30 percent less* per weighted student than the districts in the wealthiest quintile** (see Graph 3).

Graph 3.
The lower household incomes are in a Pennsylvania school district the fewer resources that are available to educate children in those districts.

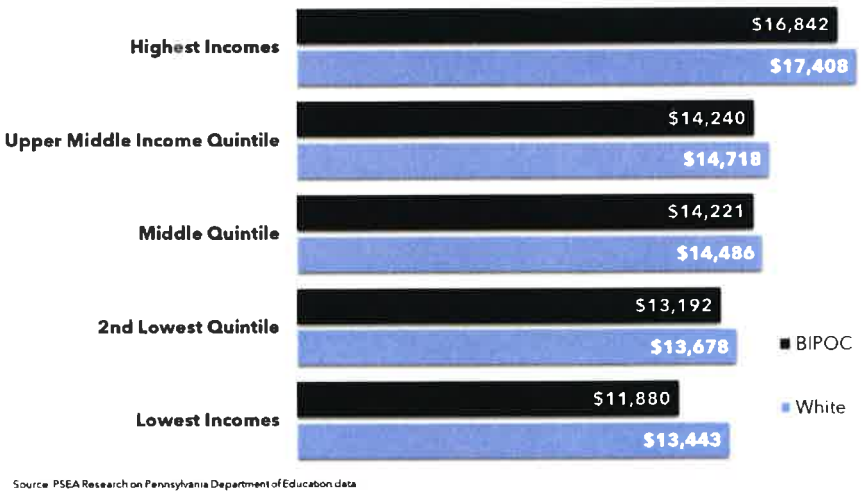
Expenditures (2021-22) per weighted student by income

Source PSEA Research based on Pennsylvania Department of Education data

When examining district expenditures for race equity, **BIPOC districts *at all income levels* spend less per weighted student than their White district counterparts**. Specific to the lowest income quintile, BIPOC districts *spend 13 percent less* than White districts (see Graph 4).

Graph 4.
Expenditures per weighted student are lower on average in BIPOC than in White districts with similar incomes.

Expenditures per weighted student by race & income 2021-22



Source PSEA Research on Pennsylvania Department of Education data

PSEA will continue to monitor and analyze State aid and district spending for equity by income and by race in Pennsylvania districts. In particular, we are struck by the reality that since FY 2014-15 the funding formula has worked well to drive more State aid to the lowest income districts – yet the districts have not been able to keep pace with the statewide average increase in resources invested in students by other districts, let alone even come close to narrowing the gap with the State's highest income districts. If the formula is working well, we must ask – why isn't the expenditure per weighted student also improving and growing? There are various factors at play and we commit to digging deeper into the data to provide recommended solutions as needed.

The findings from our Tool shared with you today only stand to support the historic decision by the Commonwealth Court declaring Pennsylvania's school funding system unconstitutional. Judge Jubelirer's thoughtfully crafted decision marks a generational turning point in the fight for equitable opportunities for all students. PSEA firmly believes the decision **provides a comprehensive framework for policymakers and advocates to utilize in developing a substantial and sustainable remedy.**[3]

THE FRAMEWORK

The Commonwealth Court Decision

Judge Jubelirer's opinion was clear:

- The State Constitution requires that "**every** student" must receive a *"**meaningful opportunity** to succeed academically, socially, and civically, which requires that **all** students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education."*[4]
- The Pennsylvania Constitution *"imposes upon Respondents an obligation to provide a system of public education that does not discriminate against students based on the level of income and value of taxable property in their school districts."*[5]

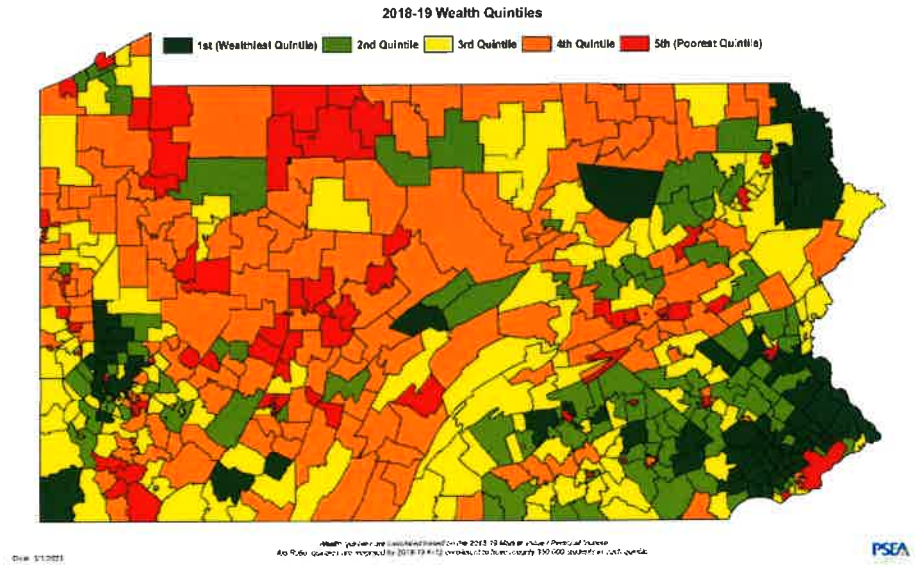
[3] William Penn School District, et al. v. Pa. Department of Education, et al., 294 A.3d 537 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2023)
[4] Id. at 886 (emphasis in original).
[5] Id. at 964.

- Respondents[6] have not fulfilled their obligations under the Education Clause.

- *As a result of disparities – "students attending low-wealth districts are being deprived of equal protection of law."*[7]

As with any policy, one should design it to meet the intended purpose. The Court made it clear that a remedy must focus on creating a constitutional system – one that does not force districts to "deprive" students of their constitutional right to a "**comprehensive effective, and contemporary system of public education**" due to inadequate and inequitable State funding.

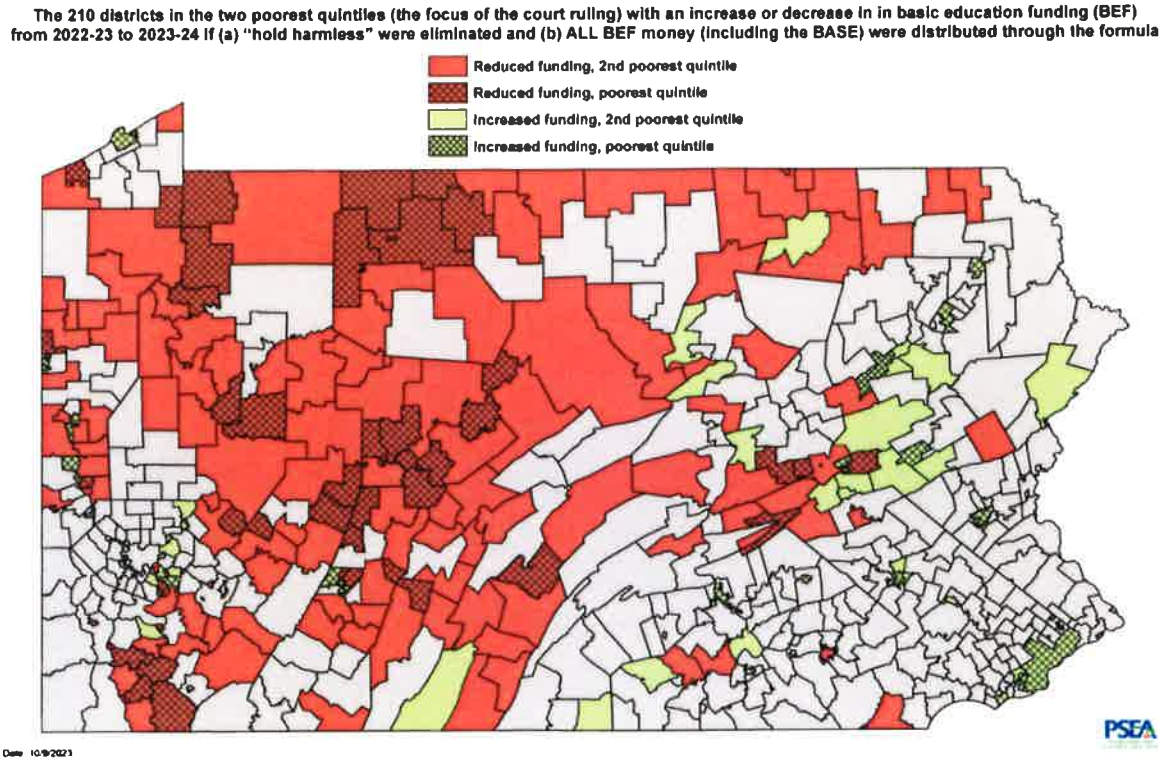
Based on the Court's opinion, PSEA has no doubt that the remedy must be focused on the districts in the two lowest wealth quintiles (marked in Red and Orange in the following map).



Therefore, a "remedy" that would reduce basic education funding for 210 school districts in the lowest two quintiles - those that should be the target of the remedy - is clearly no remedy at all.[8] The "remedy" I am referring to is eliminating the "base" and distributing the

[6] Id. at 965.
[7] Id.
[8] PSEA would note that applying the formula to the entire basic education subsidy would simultaneously increase state funding to 120 districts in the top two wealthiest quintiles.

entire basic education funding subsidy through the funding formula. While the formula does respond to student needs and district conditions, it is also dynamic and can dramatically swing a district's level of funding from year to year. The base provides districts with some semblance of financial stability. Eliminating the base and applying the current formula to all basic education funding to districts would have deleterious consequences (see map below). PSEA has, and continues to, strongly oppose distributing all basic education funding through the formula.



Adequacy Targets

The Court's ruling highlighted specific "inputs" that are essential to afford students the opportunity to meet State-determined "outcomes" - ***with funding as the foundational input for all other inputs.***[9] Districts cannot hire more teachers, remodel buildings, purchase new school curricula, or offer better technology and classroom supplies without the money to pay for them. Therefore, the question isn't *if* there is a need for more funding, but *how much*.

[9] Id. at 909.

In his testimony before the Commission, Dr. Kelly presented clear, transparent evidence that Pennsylvania has an adequacy gap of **$6.2 billion**. Utilizing a "successful schools model," Dr. Kelly identified districts that were meeting the State's interim performance goals outlined in the State's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan for graduation rates and the most recent available proficiency rates in Math and English. Dr. Kelly then removed the outliers of the highest and lowest-spending districts and calculated the median spend in the remaining 50 districts to determine a base cost per student of $14,152.

Many policymakers have talked about the need for so-called performance-based funding, whether it's within the State budget or higher education funding specifically. ***The "successful schools model" is a performance-based adequacy analysis***. PSEA would further note that the decision to use the "successful schools model" to calculate an updated base cost and corresponding adequacy gaps directly responds to criticisms raised of the 2008 Costing Out Study, including those of former Senate Education Committee Chairman Jeff Piccola criticized the original Costing Out Study for its lack of transparency for calculating the adequacy figures. Dr. Kelly's analysis, which is transparent and can be easily replicated by other analysts, responsibly responds to criticisms from the past.

Given the information presented by Dr. Kelly, as well the findings of fact included in the Commonwealth Court decision, PSEA urges the Commonwealth to do the following:

- **Establish adequacy targets for school districts.** The State and districts need a goal to be able to judge if we're making progress. Adequacy targets should start with the base cost to educate a student as well as reflect the differing needs of students to access comprehensive, effective, and contemporary public education.

- **Adopt a transparent and sustainable plan for closing adequacy gaps** – No one expects the State to close adequacy gaps in a single year. That would be unrealistic for the Commonwealth and school districts. The State and districts need to *plan* for increased investments and how they are going to close equity gaps within the inputs the Court identified. It will take time, but a plan has a begin date and end date. The plan should prioritize the districts in the two lowest wealth quintiles.

PSEA Recommendations for improving the BEF Formula

- **Revise the formula to improve stability and predictability for school districts.** This is essential for school business managers, superintendents, and boards to make crucial decisions and commit to long-term programs and staffing needs. Strategic formula revisions reduce volatility without sacrificing the formula's dynamic ability to respond to student needs and unique district conditions:
    1. Poverty count – Use a three-year average student count (ADM).
    2. Poverty concentration cliff – Create a "safe harbor" mechanism to ensure that a district cannot fall off the list of qualifying districts. Apply the safe harbor provision to districts for anywhere from three to five years. If a district goes back on the list, the clock stops, and then starts over every time a district falls off the list.
    3. Median household income index (MHHI) – Average districts' MHHI over three years.
    4. Local effort capacity index (LECI) – Update with a three-year average within the ADM for the weighted student count. Additionally, PSEA looks forward to seeing PASBO's modeling on how to adjust measuring local effort relative to a district's individual growth, rather than the current measure which is relative to local effort in all 500 districts which can penalize districts even as they increase property taxes every year.

- **Maintain the "base" but reset "base" year to one that is more current.** With almost ten years of formula use, readjusting the base to a more recent year creates balance between consistent, predictable funding and the more dynamic funding allocated through formula shares. We've heard the importance of the base and predictability in funding from other testifiers, particularly school business managers. A district that best demonstrates the importance of the base and how an infusion can stabilize it is Erie's Public Schools. In 2017, the General Assembly provided the district with a $14 million supplement that was eventually transferred into its base.[10] This is a district that was

[10] The additional $14 million was initially provided to Erie via the Education Access Program.

teetering on financial recovery status. It would not have been able to recover without the steadfast support and advocacy from Sen. Laughlin, Rep. Merski, Rep. Bizzarro, and Rep. Harkins – who all recognize the importance of the base and predictable funding.

- **Ensure new State funding is not solely provided through the basic education subsidy.** The adequacy targets presented by Dr. Kelly take into account special education expenditures. Therefore, a resolution cannot solely be directed within the basic education subsidy. Pennsylvania needs to commit to significant funding support for school districts with a greater share of special education students. Consider this: Pennsylvania has invested 7 times more funding in basic education than special education since 2014-15. And special education remains one of the largest cost-drivers of school districts.

- **Eliminate the charter weight in the formula and re-establish a charter tuition reimbursement subsidy to school districts of at least $500 million, indexed annually.** The charter weight in the BEF formula is ineffective in remedying the stranded costs of charter tuition. It accounts for only $32 million of the current formula allocation, yet total tuition payments from districts to charter and cyber charter schools is $3 billion. **In the past ten years, tuition payments from districts to charter and cyber charter schools have increased by $1.4 billion – *outpacing increases in basic education funding to districts.*** Fifty-five percent of these increased costs have been borne by the districts in the poorest quintile (Table 1). Re-establishing the charter tuition reimbursement beginning at a minimum of $500 million (and annually indexed) provides a middle ground if policymakers cannot find resolution on reasonable changes to how charter tuition is calculated.

Table 1. Charter tuition expenditures compared to basic education increases - 2012-13 to 2021-22

	Increase in Charter Tuition Expenditures from 2012-13 to 2021-22		Increase in Basic Education Subsidy Revenue 2012-13 to 2021-22	
	$	Share of Total	$	Share of Total
Statewide[1]	1,411,567,488		1,138,285,056	

By Wealth Quintile[2]:				
Wealthiest quintile (n=67)	132,829,232	9%	89,559,104	8%
Upper middle wealth quintile (n=94)	144,652,872	10%	136,757,760	12%
Middle wealth quintile (n=128)	199,612,128	14%	155,128,704	14%
Second poorest quintile (n=143)	157,281,608	11%	201,208,576	18%
Poorest quintile (n=67)	**777,176,768**	**55%**	**555,596,672**	**49%**

[1]Statewide figures include revenue/expenditure data for Bryn Athyn. The wealth quintiles do not include Bryn Athyn's revenue/expenditure data.

[2]Wealth quintiles calculated by Pennsylvania State University Professor of Education Matthew Kelly based on the 2018-19 Market Value / Personal Income Aid Ratio. Quintiles weighted by 2018-19 K-12 enrollment - roughly 350,000 students in each quintile.

Source: PSEA Research based on school district financial data collected from individual districts on PDE-2057.

School District Accountability for New Funds

When the State commits billions more to close adequacy gaps for districts, it is reasonable to seek greater accountability for how those funds are invested.

As a member-driven organization, PSEA leaders have spent the past several months meeting with members and engaging them on what they see as the vision for public education and for our union. ***Much of what we hear is the need to ensure that the State invests more in public education and ensure this additional funding is invested in evidence-based programs and strategies connected to the inputs identified by the Court, tailored to meet the needs of their students***. And PSEA's members want to be consulted by administrators on how districts should invest significant new dollars specifically in their buildings.

Educators and researchers concur there are evidence-based strategies and programs proven to improve educational outcomes for students. Pennsylvania should ensure districts are utilizing these strategies, provided by certified and well-trained professionals, and made available to ALL students who need them. Strategies and programs include things like pre-kindergarten; full-day kindergarten; a sufficient number of reading and math specialists who can intervene and provide one-on-one supports to students who are struggling; continuous resources and programs supporting students emotional and social well-being; after-school programs; tutoring; small group instruction, more personalized learning, and smaller class sizes; experienced teachers providing instruction in the subject area for which they are certified; social and emotional support services delivered via certified school social workers, psychologists, counselors, and nurses at ratios that reflect best practice; and many more.[11]

It is important to note that the common thread throughout each of these **is the need for enough well-trained and well-supported educators and staff.** This is particularly impactful for students in low wealth districts where they may lack resources at home or face additional barriers to learning. And while some of these districts may have some of the personnel needed, it is insufficient to consistently implement these essential programs and support student needs.

Court Input: STAFFING

Pennsylvania is several years into a crisis-level teacher shortage that is only going to worsen unless the Commonwealth urgently adopts significant, concerted actions to reverse this trend. **Without an adequate supply of well-trained, qualified educators and staff, Pennsylvania cannot ensure a constitutional system of public education.**

Since 2012-23, there has been a **75 percent decline in the number of Instructional I certificates** issued to in-state graduates. During that same period, there has been a **424 percent increase in the number of emergency permits issued** (see Table 2). This crisis has impacts across the Commonwealth – but most acutely in our low wealth and poorest districts. The Commonwealth is not producing enough teachers to meet demand and districts need more educators. **Giving school districts more money through a remedy without addressing the**

[11] Id. at 598-602.

pipeline will perpetuate the "hunger games" approach to personnel recruitment between and among school districts, and ultimately the underlying problem will not be solved. School districts can't manifest more teachers, more paraprofessionals, and more mental health professionals, establish smaller class sizes, reduce special education caseloads, or add new academic programs without the State urgently and comprehensively addressing the educator pipeline.

Table 2. Instructional I and Emergency Permits Issued in Pennsylvania 2012-13 to 2021-22

Year	In-State Instructional I Certificates Issued	Out-of-State Instructional I Certificates Issued	Emergency Permits (Types 1 and 4)
2012-2013	16,614	2,343	1,214
2013-2014	9,893	1,290	1,165
2014-2015	8,751	1,329	1,377
2015-2016	8,271	1,402	1,971
2016-2017	4,412	992	2,972
2017-2018	5,842	1,076	3,783
2018-2019	5,505	1,125	4,330
2019-2020	5,128	878	4,665
2020-2021	5,440	1,101	5,958
2021-2022	4,220	881	6,366
Percentage change between 2012-13 and 2021-22	-75%	-62%	424%

Source: PDE – Act 82 Report. https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Pages/Act82.aspx.

The Commonwealth Court decision rightly recognized that "[a] component of a thorough and efficient system of public education…involves teachers, *specifically sufficient, well-trained, and*

experienced ones."[12] Staffing directly impacts the availability AND quality of educational opportunities for students. Policies at the Federal and State levels have long recognized the existential importance of ensuring students have equitable access to effective educators.

PSEA urges the Commission to include recommendations for addressing the educator shortage in its final report. *Without an adequate supply of well-trained, qualified educators and staff, Pennsylvania cannot ensure a constitutional system of public education.*

The students sitting in today's classrooms are our future teachers, reading and math coaches, certified nurses, counselors, social workers, instructional aides and more. Pennsylvania must incentivize these young people to enter the education profession. The only way that can be done is to demonstrate through action that policymakers truly do respect and value the profession.

But what students witness now – teachers being demonized as part of a broader culture war, continually facing new threats and challenges each day, limited to no flexibility in their work schedule, limited input into what they teach and how they teach it; and not being paid what they are worth or required to work multiple jobs just to make ends meet – discourages them from even considering a future as an educational professional.

There are 491 districts with a starting salary of less than $60,000 and 27,440 teachers and other education professionals currently making less than that amount. These educators earn a median salary ($53,462) that is 17 percent less than the Statewide median salary of Pennsylvanians with bachelor's degrees ($64,722). Moreover, in the wealthiest quintile of districts the average teacher salary is $85,543, while the poorest quintile's average bargaining unit salary of $64,075 is 11 percent below the Statewide average bargaining unit salary of $72,074. Over $21,000 separates educators' average salary between the poorest and the wealthiest school districts. Districts in the poorest quintiles cannot compete.

[12] Id. at 916 (emphasis added).

Table 3. Average bargaining unit salaries in 2022-23 overall and by wealth quintile (2018-19)		
	Average Salary in 2022-23	% Difference from Average
Wealthiest quintile (n=67 districts)	85,543	19%
Upper middle wealth quintile (n=94 districts)	76,797	7%
Middle wealth quintile (n=128 districts)	71,172	-1%
Second poorest quintile (n=143 districts)	67,215	-7%
Poorest quintile (n=67 districts)	64,075	-11%
Average	72,074	

Source: PSEA Research based on Pennsylvania Department of Education Data.

To combat the very real challenge of the staffing shortage, PSEA has proposed raising the statutory minimum teacher salary from $18,500 to $60,000 and raising our minimum education support staff salary to $20 per hour to make the profession more economically viable.

Compensation is a critical factor in people's evaluation of the profession. Since 2010, changes enacted by the General Assembly to the State's defined benefit pension system have reduced the system's effectiveness as a recruitment and incentive tool. Many states, including New Mexico, Arkansas, and Tennessee, have a minimum salary of $50,000. Maryland will have a minimum starting salary of $60,000 beginning in 2026. West Virginia has proposed to go to $50,000. On the other hand, Pennsylvania's statutory minimum salary remains at $18,500, with the lowest contractual starting salary being Turkeyfoot Valley at $22,000.

Table 4. Average starting teacher salary in 2022-23 overall and by wealth quintile (2018-19)		
	Average Start in 2022-23	% Difference from Average
Wealthiest quintile (n=67 districts)	52,177	8%
Upper middle wealth quintile (n=94 districts)	51,330	6%
Middle wealth quintile (n=128 districts)	48,701	1%

Second poorest quintile (n=143 districts)	46,686	-4%
Poorest quintile (n=67 districts)	43,683	-10%
Average	48,409	

Source: PSEA Research based on Pennsylvania Department of Education Data.

And while it is challenging to hire teachers in the current environment, schools are finding it nearly impossible to hire support staff. These individuals are essential for supporting the whole child in their learning – everything from transporting them safely to and from school, providing additional supports in the classroom, maintaining their schools and facilities, and making sure they have a healthy breakfast and lunch.

Consider that a teacher's aide in a special needs classroom, for example, faces some of the most difficult work imaginable. Their jobs are physical and demanding, require enormous compassion, and often involve students with severe physical and intellectual disabilities. They are often times punched, kicked or bitten. They play the role of educator, caregiver, and parent for many hours per day. That same teacher's aide could go to Target, Sheetz, Wawa, or Walmart and instantly get a job paying $15 per hour. The Commonwealth cannot say that it values our support professionals and the important work they do supporting students while paying them poverty wages. It is shameful and must be remedied.

Young people are doing the cost/benefit analysis as they examine higher education costs, student loans, and the long-term ability to pay off loans and have families. PSEA's student members tell us how their families attempted to dissuade them from entering the profession. Their families tell them they won't make enough money. They'll never be able to pay off their loans and teachers aren't respected anymore. Additionally, aspiring educators are worried about how they will support themselves during the student teacher experience.

Pennsylvania must incentivize young people to enter the education profession. This includes not only teachers but all professionals that contribute to students' overall success including reading and math coaches, instructional aides, certified school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and more.

PSEA recommends that the Commonwealth adopt a scholarship program to recruit the next generation of teachers and that student teachers be paid during their "internship." Thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia have at least one program to provide scholarships, grants, stipends, tuition waivers, and/or forgivable loans to students in teacher preparation programs. Meanwhile, 45 percent of today's educators took out student loans to finance their educations with a total average loan amount of $55,580.[13] Pennsylvania just implemented a mental health stipend program a year ago, and the FY 2023-24 budget provides $10 million to address student teacher stipends.[14] While these recent steps are positive, Pennsylvania lags behind other states.

Increasing the universe of future educators is good for every district in the state, but especially those districts that struggle to attract and retain teachers. It is not about a district in Somerset County getting $300,000 more in funding and a district in Montgomery County getting $50,000 more. It is about making the education profession attractive to the teachers of tomorrow, so that we have a large pool of people from which schools can hire.

Some might argue that districts and the State can't afford to spend more on salaries. However, total wages, excluding benefits, paid to all school employees in Pennsylvania are smaller today at 3.6 percent of private sector wages than two decades ago when they averaged just over 5 percent. School district expenditures for salaries and benefits today also have a smaller footprint on total district expenditures. In the early 1990s, total compensation, salaries plus benefits, for all school employees represented **71 percent** of school district expenditures. Today compensation represents **61 percent** of total school district expenditures. By either metric, what we spend as a society to compensate school employees is by no means overly burdensome relative to the recent past.

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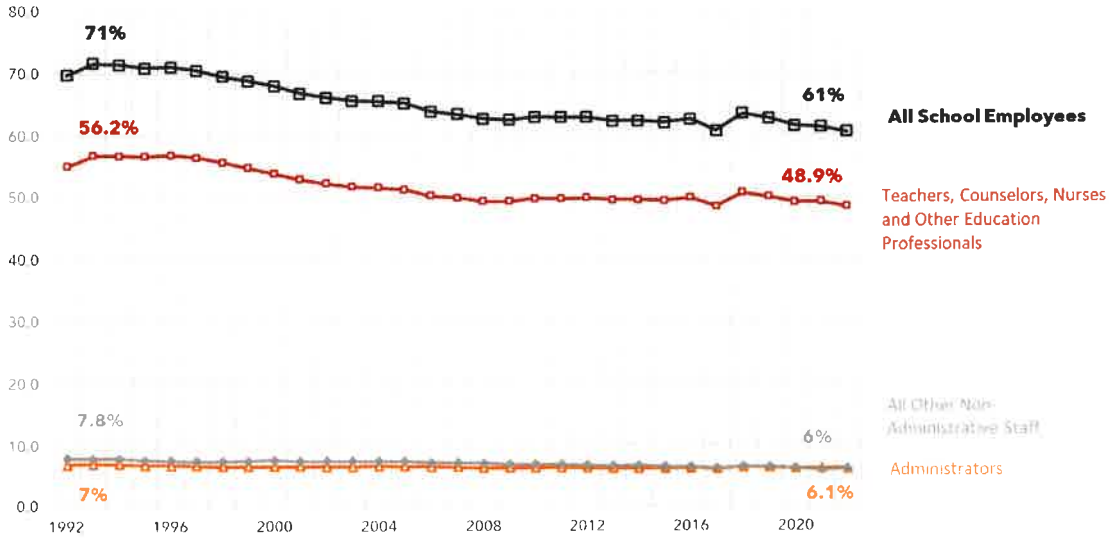
[13] "Student Loan Debt Among Educators: A National Crisis." July 2021. National Education Association and the Center for Enterprise Strategy. https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Student%20Loan%20Debt%20among%20Educators.pdf.

[14] While the FY 23-24 state budget includes $10 million for a student teacher stipend program, statutory language to direct how the program be created and operated has yet to be enacted in either a Fiscal or School Code bill.

In the early 1990s, compensation for **all school employees** including teachers, administrators averaged 71% of total district expenditures. Today, those professionals represent 61% of total district expenditures.



Note. Figures are for school districts and include all compensation (salary and benefits). The averages referenced in the title are over the period 1991-92 to 1993-94 and 2019-20 to 2021-22 respectively. The compensation cost shares here are presented at the state level, at the district level compensation cost shares will be lower reflecting state reimbursement for district contributions to social security and PSERS.

Source. PSEA Research based on school district financial data which is collected by the Commonwealth from individual school districts on form PDE-2057.

Education is a people profession, whether you're talking about students or my committed colleagues from around the state. Most education costs are related to labor. That's not surprising nor inappropriate. Efforts to reduce labor costs have contributed to the shortage Pennsylvania faces now.

Three years ago, many policymakers argued there was nothing more important than in-person instruction for our students. It is wrong to hold that position then but ignore the educator shortage today - especially when the Commonwealth Court decision specifically identifies staffing as one of the five essential inputs for a thorough and efficient education system.[15]

Again, PSEA urges the Commission to address the educator shortage in its final report and make recommendations that will enable Pennsylvania to meet its constitutional obligations. Regardless of how a funding remedy is structured, **all school districts should be required to have a**

[15] William Penn S.D. at 916.

minimum starting salary of $60,000 and the state should have a comprehensive strategy for recruiting more teachers and support professionals into the field.

Court Input: Courses, Curricula, and other Programs

In one Commission hearing, a question arose: Should the state establish expectations for what courses and programs must be offered? This is a reasonable question given the identification of the input for courses, curricula, and other programs (programs") in the Court decision[16], as well as the recommendation to establish a base amount and adequacy targets for each school district. There is clearly a need to update expectations for what courses are offered to improve equity in academic opportunities for students across all school districts. Section 1511 of the Public School Code, 24 P.S. Sec. 15-1511, a law that was adopted in 1968 and hasn't been revised since, prescribes the courses of instruction for elementary schools.

As you know, PSEA has taken great pains to respect Pennsylvania's standards aligned system in our feedback on many different pieces of legislation over the years. ***Pennsylvania should not abandon our standards aligned system, but rather update the minimum program expectations in conjunction with the enactment of a remedy***. Expectations for what children should be offered in schools have changed since 1968. Further, since federally mandated standardized testing crowds out subjects, educators want to be sure that students don't lose out on a comprehensive education. Students need instruction and access to programs in literature, art, music, foreign languages, computer programming, physical education, math, English/Language Arts, biology, chemistry, physics, social studies, community schools, civics, recess, family and consumer science, financial literacy, advanced courses that enable college credit, career and technical education, and more.

School districts should be performing robust reviews of their curricula. It has been PSEA's observation that a standards aligned curriculum that reflects the latest educational research is often lacking in districts in financial distress. Administrators and boards are doing everything in their power to keep districts operating, and curriculum often falls to the bottom of the list. PDE has regularly contracted with Mass Insight, Inc. to do academic audits of districts in financial recovery. Replacement of outdated and ineffectual curriculum is regularly identified as an

[16] Id. at 911.

improvement that districts need to undertake. The feedback from Mass Insight has been invaluable to these districts. The inclusive approach and comprehensive feedback have provided districts the basis for academic improvements.

Finally, PSEA would note that the ability of districts to offer programs is not only linked to available financial resources, but also to staffing. School entities will be able to make more programs available if there are educators available to staff them. Expanding required programmatic course and program offerings without recognition of the staffing shortage and that teachers are at maximum capacity would be a recipe for disaster.

Court Input: Facilities

In observing the Commission's hearings these past two months, it has been encouraging to witness the collective emerging recognition that school facilities are an essential component of any remedy. Certainly, our members want to see the State reinvest in supporting communities with school construction and renovation projects. Students' learning conditions are educators' working conditions. A teacher recently said to our staff that every day she drives by the new Lampeter-Strasburg Early Learning Center on her way to teach 3rd grade in Lancaster City. And every day she wonders why she can't teach in a beautiful new school.

Some schools have new HVAC systems and air conditioning, and some don't. There are buildings that don't have sufficient restrooms for staff and students. Asbestos-free classrooms, gymnasiums, reliable roofs, safe outdoor space for recess, ADA-compliant buildings, science labs, libraries, offices that aren't closets – all these things seem like they should be foundational for every school. And yet we have students and teachers in facilities that are unsafe and/or don't facilitate learning. I can't answer the questions of why some school districts didn't address facility problems in the past. But as a teacher, I can tell you what it's like to work in a classroom with no air conditioning. Students can't focus and real learning doesn't occur. I can tell you what it's like to teach in an open-pod building – like the one you saw a picture of at the Hazelton hearing. Open pods have multiple classrooms in one large room with cheap partitions separating classes. How can students focus on their lessons from me if they can hear what multiple teachers and 40-some other students are doing as well?

To reach equity in school facilities, three things must occur at the statewide level with absolute haste. First, policymakers need to understand what facility needs currently exist. PSEA urges the Commission to recommend a comprehensive facilities assessment. Second, the Commonwealth should establish appropriate minimum expectations for what makes a school facility safe and conducive for teaching and learning and specifically seek to redress the inequities identified in Judge Jubelirer's opinion. Third, the State should once again partner with local communities in financially supporting school construction and renovations. PSEA would urge the General Assembly to start that process with HB 1408.

With that said, I'm not 100 percent confident we can leave these decisions entirely in the hands of school boards. Again, I come back to the obligation to resolve inequities. Districts should not be able to allow foundational facilities inadequacies to linger for decades. There should be something to force the hands of districts and the State to ensure that school facilities are properly outfitted and safe for learning.

CONCLUSION

Again, I want to thank the Commission for allowing PSEA to provide our thoughts and recommendations with you today. We look forward to supporting each of you in this bipartisan, bicameral effort to improve Pennsylvania's school funding system. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or our staff if you want to explore our recommendations or other ideas in greater detail as you head into your final deliberations.

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Hello, my name is Sidney Clark, and I am the business manager and board secretary at Shanksville-Stonycreek School District in Somerset County. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and provide you with my perspective on shared services through the lens of one of the smallest school districts in the state.

My testimony today focuses primarily on providing information about the diverse demographics of our district's student population, our state and local revenue picture, and how the Basic Education Funding (BEF) formula has been working in our district to meet the needs of the community. I was also asked to summarize the various shared services Shanksville has utilized to maintain cost savings and provide more opportunities for our students in rural Pennsylvania, as we remain one of the smallest districts in the state.

SHANKSVILLE-STONYCREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT

Shanksville-Stonycreek School District is a unique district. We are the sixth smallest school district in Pennsylvania, with 293 students enrolled in the 2023-24 school year. The total population of our district is around 2,800 residents. Most of the land in the district is productively engaged in agriculture and farming. Lumbering and stripping have been important components of the local economy. Flight 93 has also had an impact on the local economy and tax base.

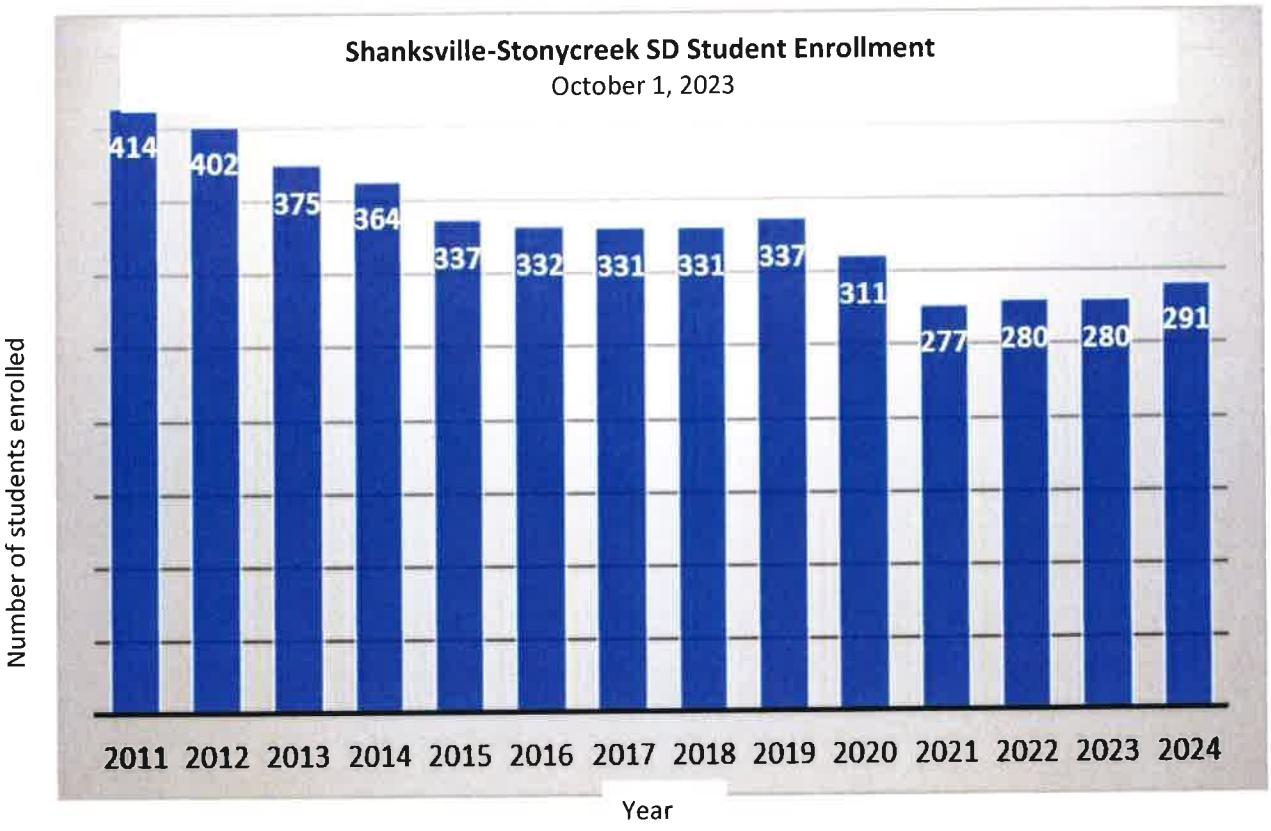
The physical size of Shanksville-Stonycreek School District is roughly 75 square miles. We are nestled between PA-31 on our southern border and US-30 on our northern border. We are comprised of three municipalities: Stonycreek Township, Shanksville Borough, and Indian Lake Borough. Stonycreek Township was established in 1792 as the last of the six original townships of Somerset County. Shanksville Borough was established in 1913 and Indian Lake Borough was established in 1968.

Both Stonycreek Township and Shanksville Borough are primary resident municipalities that provide most of our student population. Indian Lake Borough was created as part of a manmade lake constructed in 1966 and houses the very first golf course designed by Arnold Palmer, originally known as the Indian Lake Golf Club but now the Northwinds Peninsula Golf Club. It has become primarily a second-home community with some full-time residents. Only about 20% of our student population comes from Indian Lake Borough in comparison to the real estate tax revenue it generates for the school district. Indian Lake Borough generates 49% of our real estate revenue like the larger Stonycreek Township also does but with about one-half of the number of properties as the township.

As noted above, Shanksville educates just about 300 students each year, making us one of the smallest districts in the entire state. Shanksville's enrollment has been on a downward trend for many years,

though this is not unique to the district. While the commonwealth is facing an overall population decline, many districts are experiencing a decrease in enrollment due to local economic issues. In Shanksville, many jobs are leaving our four-county region which has led to an out-migration of younger residents and families.

Shanksville has not seen significant growth in student population in more than ten years. The following chart is a review of our October 1 child counts as reported via the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).



Additionally, the table below shows how common these declines are across the districts in Intermediate Unit 08 (IU 08) based on PIMS October 1 child counts since the beginning of the BEF formula.

IU 08 Districts	2016	2023	Change
Turkeyfoot Valley Area SD	389	278	-28.53%
Shade-Central City SD	456	330	-27.63%
Northern Cambria SD	1,099	803	-26.93%
Chestnut Ridge SD	1,519	1,237	-18.56%
Shanksville-Stonycreek SD	332	280	-15.66%
Everett Area SD	1,359	1,165	-14.28%
Spring Cove SD	1,924	1,658	-13.83%
Rockwood Area SD	728	634	-12.91%
Portage Area SD	922	807	-12.47%
North Star SD	1,126	1,001	-11.10%
Claysburg-Kimmel SD	854	762	-10.77%
Ferndale Area SD	673	601	-10.70%
Conemaugh Township Area SD	987	884	-10.44%
Meyersdale Area SD	863	781	-9.50%
Salisbury-Elk Lick SD	269	244	-9.29%
Cambria Heights SD	1,403	1,283	-8.55%
Tyrone Area SD	1,920	1,759	-8.39%
Northern Bedford County SD	966	887	-8.18%
Hollidaysburg Area SD	3,422	3,143	-8.15%
Blacklick Valley SD	661	608	-8.02%
Forest Hills SD	1,898	1,747	-7.96%
Penn Cambria SD	1,660	1,531	-7.77%
Altoona Area SD	7,797	7,226	-7.32%
Conemaugh Valley SD	767	711	-7.30%
Bellwood-Antis SD	1,249	1,166	-6.65%
Somerset Area SD	2,172	2,038	-6.17%
Central Cambria SD	1,699	1,601	-5.77%
Bedford Area SD	1,809	1,709	-5.53%
Berlin Brothersvalley SD	765	723	-5.49%
Tussey Mountain SD	987	949	-3.85%
Richland SD	1,592	1,532	-3.77%
Westmont Hilltop SD	1,512	1,476	-2.38%
Williamsburg Community SD	473	464	-1.90%
Greater Johnstown SD	3,003	2,970	-1.10%
Windber Area SD	1,153	1,216	5.46%

Shanksville is also unique when it comes to how its local wealth is measured in the BEF formula. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) uses the Market Value/Personal Income Aid Ratio (MV/PI) metric to compare wealth across the commonwealth for all 500 school districts. The MV/PI is a combination of two different metrics used by PDE, the Market Value Aid Ratio (60%) and the Personal Income Aid Ratio (40%). According to this metric, Shanksville is the thirtieth wealthiest district in the state.

Market Value measures the equalized market value of the property within each school district. In Shanksville, the market value of our properties is not decreasing, but our weighted average daily

membership (WADM) has been decreasing due to declining enrollment.

With the exception of Bryn Athryn SD, Shanksville has the smallest total market in the commonwealth. There are 24 school districts with a 0.1000 Market Value Aid Ratio in FY 2023-24. Below, I have listed the counties where these 24 districts are located across the state. Some of these counties make sense in terms of the general wealth of the areas; however, others, such as Somerset and Forest, appear on this list largely due to components of their tax bases that are not reflective of the larger community.

Montgomery (6)	Allegheny (1)	Sullivan (1)
Somerset (2)	Bucks (3)	Chester (3)
Forest (1)	Pike (1)	Lancaster (1)
Greene (1)	Delaware (3)	Centre (1)

The personal income metric for 2023-2024 utilizes 2021 data, and the number can fluctuate as residents and students move in and out of the school district.

AUN	School District	County	2023-24 Market Value Aid Ratio	Personal Income Aid Ratio	2023-24 Market Value / Personal Income Aid Ratio
123467203	Springfield Township SD	Montgomery	0.1648	0.1000	0.1500
122098003	Palisades SD	Bucks	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
122097604	New Hope-Solebury SD	Bucks	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
124158503	Unionville-Chadds Ford SD	Chester	0.1217	0.1000	0.1500
123463603	Hatboro-Horsham SD	Montgomery	0.1000	0.2222	0.1500
125237903	Rose Tree Media SD	Delaware	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
125235502	Marple Newtown SD	Delaware	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
125237603	Radnor Township SD	Delaware	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
123469303	Wissahickon SD	Montgomery	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
124153503	Great Valley SD	Chester	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
123461602	Colonial SD	Montgomery	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
123468402	Upper Merion Area SD	Montgomery	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
124157802	Tredyffrin-Easttown SD	Chester	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
122092353	Council Rock SD	Bucks	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
123464502	Lower Merion SD	Montgomery	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
124159002	West Chester Area SD	Chester	0.1000	0.1000	0.1500
123465303	Methacton SD	Montgomery	0.1901	0.1000	0.1540
123468303	Upper Dublin SD	Montgomery	0.2052	0.1000	0.1631
122092102	Central Bucks SD	Bucks	0.1555	0.1908	0.1696
121395703	Southern Lehigh SD	Lehigh	0.2182	0.1180	0.1781
110148002	State College Area SD	Centre	0.1000	0.3156	0.1862
104105003	Mars Area SD	Butler	0.2337	0.1363	0.1947
124157203	Phoenixville Area SD	Chester	0.2685	0.1000	0.2011
113362303	Eastern Lancaster County SD	Lancaster	0.1343	0.3020	0.2013
120486003	Saucon Valley SD	Northampton	0.2345	0.1599	0.2046
103023912	Fox Chapel Area SD	Allegheny	0.2785	0.1000	0.2071
108567404	Shanksville-Stonycreek SD	Somerset	0.1000	0.3941	0.2176

Shanksville's overall rank appears to indicate that the district is wealthy compared to all 500 districts. However, the data above highlights some of the inaccuracies of the MV/PI metric when measuring local wealth—particularly in a small district with declining enrollment. Additionally, the wealth that does appear in Shanksville—even if you look at the median household income data as used in the BEF formula, illustrates the wealth concentrated in one main component of the district—Indian Lake, as discussed above. Indian Lake Borough is made up of larger, mostly second homes. This inflates the apparent wealth of the community without reflecting the wealth of the people who live in, work in, or have resident students attending the district. The small size of Shanksville, its declining enrollment, and its unique community have resulted in many challenges in terms of state funding and opportunities.

From a funding perspective, Shanksville separates revenues into three separate categories; local, state, and federal revenue. Local revenues represent the majority of Shanksville's total revenue picture, and normally range from 60-65% of our total annual revenue. Local revenues show continued growth on an annual basis for the past seven years, except in 2019-2020 when Indian Lake Borough took over ownership of the Indian Lake Golf Club golf course. While the local share of total revenue decreases over time, our state revenues overall show growth each year. In FY 2022-23, Shanksville's state revenues were 35% of total revenues, returning to 2010-11 levels.

Shanksville's federal revenues were approximately 2.0-3.5% of our total annual revenue before COVID-19 hit. Due to an influx of one-time federal stimulus dollars since 2019-20, our federal revenues jumped from around 6-7% to 15% between 2019-20 and 2022-23. Overall, once all of the COVID federal stimulus funds have transitioned out of the revenue equation, Shanksville should return to a 62% local/ 35% state/3% federal revenue breakdown.

From a state funding perspective, Shanksville's share of BEF formula funds is small due to our size—and with our declining enrollment, and increasing wealth (at least on paper) we have seen a decline in our state share over time. In this fiscal year, we expected to receive about $262,000 through the BEF formula, out of the overall share of $1.99 billion. With a $567 million increase in BEF for 2023-24, we are anticipating a $67,000 increase over 2022-23. Had there not been an increase in the appropriation, we would have received fewer funds through BEF than last year.

Our decline in share is a result of our enrollment decline, but also a decline in our acute poverty percentage as well. At one point, we qualified for concentrated poverty as more than 31% of our resident children were living below the federal poverty line. In 2019-20, we fell out of eligibility for the weight, with our acute poverty percentage dropping to 29.89%--just below the threshold. Since then, our acute poverty has continued to fall every year, and it is at an all-time low of approximately 12%. At no point since the pandemic has our student or resident population changed. Additionally, during this time we have seen our poverty percentage fluctuate significantly as well.

The volatility in the poverty data has contributed to our decline in share, and efforts to mitigate that volatility would prove beneficial in budgeting from year to year. While we are no longer eligible for the concentrated poverty weight, I can speak from experience that the dramatic loss in share was significant. Our share loss was 17% when our acute poverty fell from 31% to 28.89%, something we had no control over.

Another current component of the BEF formula is the charter school weight. The 2022-23 charter school regular education tuition ranged from $25,150.04 per student in the highest-paying district to $7,291.79 in the lowest-paying district that filed their PDE-363. Shanksville was ranked number twelve on that list at $19,010.47 per student. Shanksville has been in the top twelve for the last six years, and in four of those years we have been in the top ten.

While Shanksville does not have a significant number of students attending charter schools, the charter school tuition calculation—particularly with the small and declining denominator that is based on our ADMs—results in one of the highest charter school tuition rates across the commonwealth. When looking at the BEF formula, the charter school weight does not do much to compensate districts for tuition paid to charter schools. I believe this component could become a charter school reimbursement like it did in the past.

The Sparsity/Size adjustment in the BEF formula has a 0.53% impact statewide in terms of the ADMs added through that weight, but it is an element that impacts Shanksville, and we certainly benefit from its inclusion in the formula. Overall, Shanksville's slice of the BEF pie ranks 497 out of 500. Since the BEF pie is sliced based on adjusted ADM numbers, it only makes sense that Shanksville is almost at the end of the line.

In terms of other state revenues, the Special Education Funding formula is gauged similarly to the BEF formula in that it is based on the student counts plus or minus special education factors as well. Shanksville is one of seven school districts expected to receive fewer special education dollars in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23. This is partially due to Shanksville's size, but it is also because the SEF formula uses the MV/PI aid ratio to measure local wealth, which negatively impacts Shanksville and misrepresents the wealth of our district and our students.

Additionally, the PSERS and Social Security reimbursement formulas are impacted by MV/PI aid ratios. School districts with higher MV/PI aid ratios receive more than the 50% base reimbursement, and, as a result, Shanksville receives the base amount. Rental and Sinking Fund (PlanCon) reimbursement would also be adjusted by the MV/PI aid ratio, which reduces reimbursements to our district.

While we work hard at Shanksville to use every penny of revenue wisely to ensure sustainability, innovation, and efficacy in programming and operation, we also recognize our place amongst the commonwealth's 500 school districts in terms of size and need. Funding streams like the school safety and mental health program dollars are to be distributed to school districts based on a flat $100,000 plus an ADM add-on. While Shanksville appreciates the funds, we also acknowledge that there are districts that likely need far more than the $100,000 base and what the ADM add-on drives out. Thinking through other ways to distribute some of these funds to make a stronger impact across the commonwealth could be valuable.

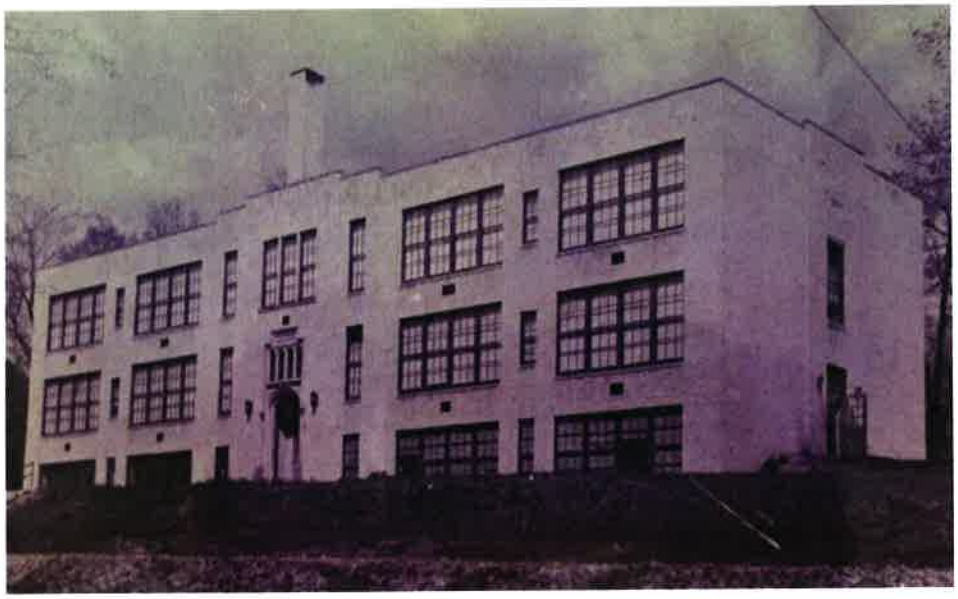
Shanksville's History

Shanksville is a unique school district in a unique community, and while we encounter many challenges, we also have a long history of innovation, partnerships, and doing everything we can to provide every opportunity for our students.

In 1929, Stonycreek Township and Shanksville Borough agreed to build a consolidated school. This was a major change in the educational process, taking the place of 16 one-room schools and bringing students together in a larger learning environment.

The overall benefit of a consolidated school can be summarized best by the following explanation from the Dedication Journal for the Public Schools of Stonycreek Township – (Consolidated 1929):

> "The Consolidated School means much more than the sum of the small schools it has supplanted. It means better grading, more direct and helpful instruction, greater physical comfort and more effective moral training. It gives every child an equal chance, and all children a larger opportunity in rightful public-school benefits. It will no longer be necessary to move to town and attend a high school, or to attend a private academy to prepare for college. It will add to the natural advantages of rural life, the benefits formerly according only to boys and girls in the crowded city."



The cost of the new school in 1929 was only $99,113.00. When completed, the school contained fourteen standard classrooms, plus additional rooms for vocational training, group instruction, a library and reference room, a principal's office, a teachers room, and a health room. An auditorium with a stage and seating capacity of five hundred was also used as a gymnasium. The school opened on December 30, 1929.

As the years went by, new classes were added (grades 10, 11, and 12). The state required additional courses for graduation, and parents and school boards wanted to upgrade curriculum. The school found itself overcrowded and in need of more space for the extra students and activities.

In 1954, the School Board applied to PDE to put on an addition that would include twelve extra classrooms. This request was denied, allowing only six classrooms to be added. Upon persistence by the school board, a compromise was reached and eight classrooms were installed. At the same time, a cafeteria-all-purpose room was added, the auditorium was remodeled, music rooms were added to the back of the auditorium, and the Vo-Ag and Industrial Arts shops were enlarged.

Again, methods of teaching evolved with an emphasis on individualized instruction and the use of more equipment, such as audiovisual hardware, and the state government required more course options. The school found itself with a lack of space, causing the district to purchase and place two portable classroom trailers next to the complex. In the 1960s, the school board resisted pressures to merge with other school districts and emphasized the intent of the community to maintain local control.

In the early 1970s educational advancements and changes in the focus of curriculum prompted many districts to initiate new building programs. The community was embroiled in a bitter fight over the issue, but enough support was mustered to create a "Taxpayers Lawsuit" that effectively halted the building program and sent the district into a building moratorium for almost twenty years.

In 1989, there was still some resistance to building programs, but federal and state laws placed additional demands for space and educational programs in all school districts. Buildings needed to be accessible to students with disabilities, asbestos had to be removed, and air quality had to be monitored in all Pennsylvania schools. Parents were asking for smaller class sizes, and special education students were given additional instruction with individualized educational plans (IEPs). These items, coupled with a deteriorating building, forced the community to reassess its thoughts about construction.

The district removed asbestos in the building complex, installed new windows in the high school, added a new library with two small reading rooms, added four elementary classrooms, and made repairs to the boilers. The district was able to avoid discussions of a merger with other districts.

With the advent of the 1990s and a new and faster tempo in education fueled by a boom in technological advancements and closer parental and community involvement, the district found itself at a financial crossroads that threatened the continued existence of the school district. A major decision had to be made: either take on a major building and renovation project that would stretch our financial limits or merge with other school districts.

In 1999, the Shanksville-Stonycreek school board took on the largest building and renovation project the district had ever seen, a $9.5 million endeavor. Completed in 2000-01, the district created a facility that was as well-equipped technologically compared to other facilities in the area at the time. The entire building was remodeled to create new and larger spaces for more effective instruction. A new kitchen, cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium, locker rooms, office spaces, art room, shop areas, music room, guidance offices, chemistry, physics, and biology labs, computer labs, and small group instruction areas were all added. The district also completed electrical, heating, and plumbing overhauls.

Since the 2000 renovation, the district has added two additional buildings to the site: a maintenance shed and a foundation-funded greenhouse.

PlanCon, which was in place for our last renovation project in 2000 provided Shanksville with post-project reimbursement that included architects and financial experts as a net reduction to the total cost of a building project or renovation. The money had to be spent first before the district could receive any reimbursement from the commonwealth.

Now, in 2023, Shanksville is close to completing the first facilities feasibility study since the renovation in 2000. During this study, the architect emphasized how impressive the overall appearance of the building is even with identified issues that need to be addressed. The mechanical engineer, who was also the engineer who helped renovate our facility back in 2000, stated the proactive work done by the maintenance staff to perform preventative maintenance on our buildings has prolonged the life cycle of our facility.

Shanksville has also paid off all of our debt related for that 2000 renovation project. We refinanced bonds when it created savings for the district, and we could lower interest rates up until September 2019, when we made our final debt service payment.

Even during our debt service payment years, we carefully budgeted every dollar we could save each fiscal year and put money into our Capital Reserve fund to prepare for the future of our facility. Once the final debt service payment was made, the board decided to continue to put that same amount into our Capital Reserve fund again preparing for our facility's future.

Last year, when the board decided to conduct a feasibility study of our facilities, recognizing that most of our mechanical components were approaching the end of their life cycles, we received six different quotes for the study of one site. I thought it best to share the results of our RFP to show how difficult it can be to put an exact dollar amount on a study.

Firm	Location	Amount	Notes
Firm A	Harrisburg/Hollidaysburg	$5,840.00	Will credit $1,000 for every $1 million
Firm B	Mechanicsburg	$8,500.00	Expenses Will credit back if part of the projects are awarded
Firm C	Harrisburg	$10,000.00	Will credit back if used for large project
Firm D	Indiana/Johnstown	$11,000.00	Not to exceed
Firm E	New Kensington	$25,950.00	
Firm F	Wexford	$30,000.00	

We ended up going with Firm B because they were already in the area conducting a study for a neighboring district, and we thought we would recover our initial cost quicker with their proposal than the cheapest proposal. Our focus will be on the projects that should take place in the next four years. The goal is to be able to fund the needed projects over this period of time while remaining debt-free.

This study does not include any expansions but addresses the concerns of the facility after 23 years of solid use. This 10-year facilities plan includes maintaining good fiscal practices that will continue to keep Shanksville-Stonycreek in good financial standing.

SHANKSVILLE'S EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

As noted above, our initial building was constructed specifically for grades up to Grade 9. Grades 10, 11, and 12 were added later due to increasing enrollment in the area brought about by the elementary school. Building that school on the same site proved beneficial over time as they continued to add on to both buildings, making them completely function as a single unit. Final renovations were completed around 2000.

Shanksville's administration and school board looked ahead and started a closed enrollment pre-kindergarten program to provide an early start for those who were behind before Pre-K Counts money was available. Open enrollment in pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten came long before Pre-K Counts funding or the Read to Learn Block Grant.

The district applied for and received funding for a community computer lab within the library that also brought wireless internet access to the community. Shanksville was also one of the Classroom for the Futures school districts that helped put more technology in the classroom.

I have included our current in-person course catalog that provides you with a look at the onsite course offerings Shanksville offers at the secondary level for Grades 6 through 12. In that course catalog, you will also see that students have the option to participate at the Somerset County Technology Center (SCTC). There are seventeen different vocational programs they can choose from in addition to a half-day of instruction at Shanksville.

You can also review our graduation requirements. Our students, who are required to earn 27 credits in specific subject areas, also have the option of completing a "culminating project". Upon completion of this project, our students leave Shanksville with a complete resume and have had the experience of writing a cover letter and going through the interview process to better prepare them for the next chapter in their lives.

In 2008-2009, Shanksville collaborated with an outside company to provide Blended Learning for our students, which allowed our Shanksville students to take classes online. This program provides students with an opportunity to learn a second foreign language other than Spanish and an online learning solution for students who still want to earn a Shanksville-Stonycreek SD diploma instead of one from a cyber charter school. We also offer AP courses through our Blended program, but we have not had any students enroll to date.

Shanksville graciously offers every Blended student their own computer throughout the program. We also include internet access when it is not available in the home as long we can provide coverage. We still struggle with many areas within the district that do not have cable, DSL, dish, or cellular internet access. I have included a copy of our in-house curriculum guide and the Blended course catalog our vendor provides for our students so the Commission can see all of the learning opportunities we can provide our students at Shanksville-Stonycreek, despite our small size.

DUAL CREDIT, DUAL ENROLLMENT, AND EARLY COLLEGE

Shanksville took advantage of the dual enrollment reimbursement the state provided in the early 2000s and began to provide early college opportunities for our students. Although funding has concluded, Shanksville continues to offer the opportunity to provide college credits at a reduced cost.

We currently work with Allegheny College of Maryland to bring in professors to teach four different courses and we work with Mount Aloysius and Saint Francis who have certified our high school curriculum so our classroom teachers can qualify as the college's instructors. Shanksville offers eight college courses for a total of 27 credits. Allegheny College of Maryland also offers the ability for our students to take additional online courses outside of the normal school day at a reduced tuition rate.

In regards to dual credit and enrollment courses, child accounting rules specify that the district must pay for 100% of the college course to receive average daily membership (ADM) credit for the student taking any course. As a result, our certified chemistry teacher teaches our Advanced Chemistry course. The

course contains students who want to earn and pay for college credits and those who do not. Both are taught by the same teacher at the same time. We automatically receive ADM credit for a non-college credit student, but we have to pay all of the costs for those students who want to earn college credits.

College Course	Credits
ACM Sociology	3
ACM English	3
ACM Western Civilization	3
ACM Psychology	3
Mt Aloy Adv Chemistry	4
Mt Aloy Calculus	4
St Francis Pre-Calc	3
Mt Aloy Anatomy	4
Total Possible Credits	**27**

SHANKSVILLE'S UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Our students get to participate in unique learning experiences when attending Shanksville. Although not every activity we highlight may be unique to Shanksville, it is these experiences that make education all the more enjoyable.

Greenhouse Project

We were awarded a grant from a private foundation to purchase a greenhouse. With volunteer labor and a resourceful maintenance supervisor, we were able to purchase a larger greenhouse to create enough learning space for not only the fourth and fifth-grade classes but also our technical education and biology students. The fourth and fifth graders would grow various vegetable plants from seeds in the classroom to garden-ready size in the greenhouse. Afterwards, they would put their math skills to use as they ran a store for the public to come purchase their plants.

The biology students have done work with aquaponics and Future Farmers of America (FFA) students use the greenhouse to grow Mother's Day hanging baskets and the flowers and plants used during graduation. Over time, we have added an automatic watering system and propane heat to the

greenhouse to allow for more instructional time throughout the school year. We replace our plastic covering around every five years.

FFA Program

When I first arrived at Shanksville, our students had to travel to neighboring Berlin-Brothersvalley School District if they wanted to participate in a vocational-agriculture program. Shanksville previously had an FFA program, which was phased out of the curriculum many years ago.

We were able to bring the FFA program back to Shanksville with around 25 students participating in the program. Two years ago, we brought in an agriculture teacher in place of our technology education teacher. The program continues to grow and thrive each year with students earning state-level awards and attending the National FFA Conference.

FA students actively participate in the Somerset County Fair and work with other FFA students from other county school districts to provide learning opportunities for the public. FFA students have also worked with the Somerset County Food Bank to provide support at their farm and grow fresh produce to distribute at the food bank. Our students helped grow pepper plants in Shanksville's greenhouse up until they were ready to be planted at the food bank's farm. Our students also helped the food bank farm staff harvest potatoes at harvest time.

PA Trout Program

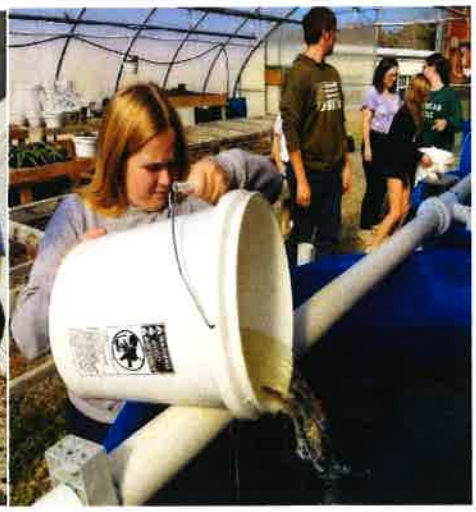
Our fourth and fifth-grade students have the opportunity to raise trout from frozen eggs that get delivered to the school and release them in our neighborhood trout stream, the Stonycreek River. Our partnership with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is a great learning experience for our

students. Students also spend time learning how to tie flies and the basics of fly fishing before they prepare to release their trout in the wild.

Lake Somerset Catfish Program

FFA and agriculture students are working with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to raise channel catfish for release in the newly redone Lake Somerset. Various Somerset County schools participated in the program, but Shanksville had the largest system with three tanks that were also built and reconstructed by our students.

This past year, our students have also built and constructed fish habitats and turtle basking platforms to create a turtle population in and around Somerset Lake. It allows students to raise and release the fish, but then and encourages population growth in our local lakes and streams. We just received another 1,200 channel catfish on October 25 to raise this year.



Hands-On Opportunities for Tech Students

We have created hands-on learning opportunities for our technology students. Shortly after I started at Shanksville, the SCTC Masonry students built a sign display unit that has been showcased in front of our school for over ten years.

Just last month, our latest SCTC Masonry class returned to repair our dugouts on both the softball and baseball fields used by our sports teams and the local community.

Music and Fine Arts

As a result of growing mandated costs in other areas, many school districts have cut music and fine arts from their curriculum. Instead of cutting our music programs altogether, we ended up keeping two music teachers on staff. The current band teacher has tripled the number of students in the program since she started. We continue to have multiple students perform at the district, regional, and state

levels in vocals and instruments. This past year we had one student go on to the All-East Coast Chorus in New York.

Our librarians over the years have our students truly interested in reading. We have strong participation numbers in all three levels (elementary, middle, and high school) of our reading competition teams that perform strongly at our IU competitions each year.

Forensics is a strong extra-curricular activity for us as well. Many students over the years have qualified for states and nationals traveling all over the us to compete nationally. Orlando, Washington DC, Chicago, and Kentucky are only a few places these students have had the opportunity to travel to and compete at the national level.

Community Involvement

We often stress and promote community involvement with our students. Many of our clubs and organizations fundraise for specific organizations like Toys for Tots, Easter Seals, the local food bank, and the American Cancer Society. Students have also provided many hours of community service at the Flight 93 Memorial, Patriot Park, Earth Day clean up, and the senior class does a day of community service days before graduation as a thank you to the community that helped raise them.

Many members of our community also in turn step up to support our students. At the end of each school year, we hold an awards ceremony for our community members to recognize those students of Shanksville that go above and beyond.

Athletics

In addition to our extensive list of academic opportunities we provide our students here at Shanksville, we make every effort to provide the same opportunity to any of our student-athletes, and we do it through the relationships we have with our neighboring school districts. The complete list of the PIAA-affiliated sports Shanksville offers its students is listed below and 27different sports make up our complete athletic program.

In 1988, Shade-Central City School District agreed to host Shanksville-Stonycreek School District in a football co-op agreement that allowed both districts together to field a football team. Over time, Shanksville has joined into other sports co-operative agreements as both the host and as a sending district with Shade-Central City School District and Berlin-Brothersvalley School District. These agreements have allowed existing sports teams to continue to compete as well as create new opportunities for student-athletes.

Shade-Central City School District and Shanksville-Stonycreek School District have gone one step further than the typical sports co-op this past school year. The two districts have agreed to combine forces completely in the realm of athletics, form an athletic partnership for all sports, and compete under a new unified team name and mascot. This partnership will become a 50/50 split on all athletic costs. Financial liability under the current sports co-op would normally fall onto the host district unless both districts put it in their agreement to share costs. We are currently in the process of holding a rebranding contest with both of our districts and are excited to roll out a new athletic identity later this school year.

To help our programs continue to grow and provide interest for the younger students, both districts have combined their youth (under 12) programs for volleyball, basketball, and occasionally baseball and softball. They also participate in the youth programs at other schools we co-op with for soccer, football, and wrestling. PIAA District 5 is comprised of the school districts in Somerset, Bedford, and Fulton Counties along with one Franklin County school district. Of the 24 PIAA District 5 schools, 20 have at least one sports co-op with another school district. Combined, PIAA District 5 schools have over 145 sports co-ops that include teams from PIAA District 3, PIAA District 6, and two private schools.

Each sports co-op is voted upon and approved by PIAA District 5 schools and at the state level by the PIAA. I have included a list of sports co-ops involving PIAA District 5 teams for the Commission's review and to outline the extent of the cooperative efforts occurring in PIAA District 5 schools.

2023-2024 SHANKSVILLE-STONYCREEK ATHLETIC OPPORTUNITIES

SPORT	SEASON	CO-OP	HOST	SCHOOLS
*Co-Ed Golf	Fall	Yes	Shanksville	Shanksville, Berlin, Shade
*Girls Tennis	Fall	Yes	Shanksville	Shanksville, Berlin, Shade
*Girls Varsity Volleyball	Fall	Yes	Shade	Shade, Shanksville
*Girls JH Volleyball	Fall	Yes	Shade	Shade, Shanksville
*Boys/Girls JH Cross Country	Fall	Yes	Shade	Shade, Shanksville
*Boys/Girls V Cross Country	Fall	Yes	Shade	Shade, Shanksville
Boys Varsity Soccer	Fall	Yes	Berlin	Berlin, Shanksville
Girls Varsity Soccer	Fall	Yes	Berlin	Berlin, Shanksville
Boys JH Soccer	Fall	Yes	Berlin	Berlin, Shanksville
Girls JH Soccer	Fall	Yes	Berlin	Berlin, Shanksville
Boys Varsity Football	Fall	Yes	Berlin	Berlin, Rockwood, Shanksville
Boys JH Football	Fall	Yes	Berlin	Berlin, Rockwood, Shanksville
Varsity Wrestling	Winter	Yes	Berlin	Berlin, Rockwood, Shanksville
JH Wrestling	Winter	Yes	Berlin	Berlin, Rockwood, Shanksville
*Co-Ed Rifle	Winter	Yes	Shanksville	Shanksville, Shade
*Boys Varsity Basketball	Winter	Yes	Shanksville	Shanksville, Shade
*Boys JH Basketball	Winter	Yes	Shanksville	Shanksville, Shade
*Girls Varsity Basketball	Winter	Yes	Shade	Shade, Shanksville
*Girls JH Basketball	Winter	Yes	Shanksville	Shanksville, Shade
*Varsity Baseball	Spring	Yes	Shanksville	Shanksville, Shade
*JH Baseball	Spring	Yes	Shanksville	Shanksville, Shade
*Softball	Spring	Yes	Shade	Shade, Shanksville
*JH Softball	Spring	Yes	Shanksville	Shanksville, Shade
*Varsity Track	Spring	Yes	Shade	Shade, Shanksville
JH Track	Spring	Yes	Berlin	Berlin, Shanksville

MERGER/CONSOLIDATION

Consolidation is a controversial subject that has been discussed and debated since the 1940s in the commonwealth. It has taken three separate pieces of legislation (Act 561 of 1961, Act 299 of 196, and Act 150 of 1968) to reduce the number of school districts from a little over 2,500 down to 505. The court has reduced that number to 501, and since then, only one voluntary merger reduced the number to 500 today.

I have included a copy of the April 2009 PSBA Education Research & Policy Center report entitled "Merger/Consolidation of School Districts: Does it save money and improve student achievement?" for the Commission's review. Dr. David Davare, the PSBA Director of Research Services at that time, was a respected public education representative when he put the report together. The study not only addressed the financial impacts of consolidation/mergers, but it also considered student achievement and its impact on the local communities.

Word choice is always key in any discussion to get positive results. Consolidation is a forced combination of multiple entities by an outside agency. A merger is a voluntary fusion of multiple entities into one new one. Many districts have considered voluntary mergers as a solution to their economic struggles following the post-ARRA days. Some districts could not find partners to move forward while others could not afford the upfront feasibility study costs and other financial implications that come with combining two separate districts. The process used in the 1960s was largely effective because the commonwealth provided incentives to help struggling school districts pay for these upfront costs.

Across the commonwealth, districts are experiencing declining enrollment and aging buildings in desperate need of upgrades and/or complete replacement. These districts, including Shanksville, are being forced to consider how many physical buildings they need to continue operations in a fiscally efficient manner. There is not a school district in Bedford County that has not had to close a school building in their district.

Because more school districts in remote and rural Pennsylvania are closing buildings due to decreasing enrollment, additional issues regarding transportation have crept to the surface. School buildings that are currently being used by Everett and Bedford are solely located in the northern tiers of the districts, causing students to have bus rides of more than an hour if they live at the south of their districts.

These factors are important to consider when stepping into some of the conversations about merger and consolidation. While the state's transportation formula includes an inflationary adjustment, it does not keep pace with our cost drivers, including the cost of fuel for buses and vans that continues to increase as buildings close. As a result, the transportation subsidy does not always cover rural districts' growth in expenditures, nor does it effectively allow us to address the unique situations in which we may not be able to benefit from economies of scale as we are trying to right-size.

SHARED SERVICES

Shanksville-Stonycreek has utilized shared services in our continued academic and financial success as one of the smallest districts in the commonwealth. Shanksville utilizes IU08 to obtain services when it is not cost-effective to hire someone new since we cannot provide them with full-time work on a regular basis. Shanksville currently receives speech therapy services, social work services, early intervention services, and autistic support services through the IU. We have also utilized IU08 for hearing services, psychological services, and other services on an as-needed basis.

Staffing issues have affected our access to implement shared services with the IU. Currently, the IU is not able to hire enough school psychologists to fulfill the need in our area. These school psychologists, as well as other shared service providers employed by the IU, log a lot of travel miles between assignments as they are assigned to multiple districts in our rural IU. In order to get psychology services, we ended up partnering with three other Somerset County schools to share one school psychologist. Previously, Shanksville had a shared services agreement with a neighboring district for a school psychologist that the other district ended up hiring full-time.

Shanksville also had a previous agreement with another IU08 district to share a curriculum director until their retirement. We also utilize open seats in neighboring school districts' life skills classrooms to help control special education costs when needed. We have two neighboring school districts that are sharing the same physics teacher and Shanksville is using IU08's World of Learning for our library classes. Other districts share certain positions within their administrative structure.

Shanksville has also utilized shared services from other IUs as well. We use IU03's teacher recruiting website, paeducator.net. We take advantage of the Microsoft Group purchasing agreement that IU 13 has in place for the commonwealth. CSIU (IU16) has developed its own school district financial software package that it sells and supports along with providing PEPPM contract purchasing options. MCIU and CCIU work together in providing additional support for school districts that use PowerSchool products.

Career and technical centers are another great shared services concept that have been utilized since the 1960s. The Somerset County Technical Center that Shanksville is affiliated with has been providing CTE services in a shared services environment since 1967. Shanksville has also utilized other shared services with other county districts. Our superintendents meet monthly to share and communicate the needs and issues of their districts, and to assist each other when possible. Our county business managers meet monthly and communicate regularly to share ideas on how to collaborate and save costs.

Shanksville has also looked at other shared service opportunities outside the school district world. We have utilized SCI Laurel Highland's work release programs multiple times for facility improvements. We had one of their work crews over the summer to help paint the school and are working on their return to paint newly repaired dugouts.

Shanksville also participates in the Pittsburgh Regional Food Service Directors, a food purchasing consortium of 115 school districts with self-operating food service programs. This consortium provides us with the ability to control costs in our food service program and still be able to prepare meals onsite for our students.

Shanksville also utilized two different consortiums in regards to insurance coverages as well. The Somerset County and Bedford County school districts and CTCs have partnered in a healthcare consortium that has saved each of the districts money annually as our consortium performs better than most Highmark clients by paying for our own healthcare claims out of a shared fund that all members contribute towards. Shanksville also partners with 37 other LEAs in a similar dental consortium where we have maintained the same premium contributions for Shanksville since 2019-2020.

Shanksville also has established shared services with our municipalities. The Grove property that is located adjacent to the district's property is shared with Stonycreek Township. The Grove houses our tennis courts along with our baseball and softball fields. We share the costs of maintaining these fields and in return, the district has priority over the courts and fields during their respective seasons.

We also share the use and costs of maintaining the township's fuel pump system. This allows the district to obtain gas and diesel fuel for the district-owned equipment while the township receives fuel tax credits to use for road maintenance. We also provide the fuel to all of our transportation contractors to help control the fuel costs that the district pays a portion of, as stated within our negotiated transportation contracts. We also get our cinder for winter weather from the township to save storage space on the property. The township also arranges for a local mining operation to bring their street sweep to the district property to sweep up cinder each spring.

A more recent shared service that has helped out our district is for police and security services from one of our boroughs. The district property is physically located in the township, placing it under the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania State Police. With an approved agreement between the township, borough, and school district, our property is now under the jurisdiction of the borough police department. This allows for more timely responses when police services are needed.

Our shared agreement employs part-time officers as security personnel during all of our afterschool activities. The school district utilizes this shared service from September to May, allowing the borough to provide more full-time opportunities to its police force.

CONCLUSION

I appreciate the efforts being made by the Commission to collect information from every angle of public education to ensure the best changes are made moving forward not only in the BEF formula but in the commonwealth's overall funding of public education. Overall, Shanksville-Stonycreek School District works hard to provide for our students and our community. As our state funding continues to be reduced as our shares of BEF and SEF decline—mostly due to our enrollment declines, we continue to adjust to ensure that we're still providing opportunities for our students.

Necessity, as we have experienced in Shanksville, breeds innovation, and our shared services opportunities have served us well. We will continue to be innovative and pursue other options as we move forward and we know that much of what we have done can be, and is already being replicated by school districts across the commonwealth.

Education as we know it can be compared to a six-lane highway similar to the Capital Beltway. The four inside lanes would represent traditional school districts, CTC, and IUs—where the bulk of our students receive their education. Each of these entities can and should easily work together to maximize the opportunities available for all students.

One outside lane is separated from the other five by a flat rumble strip. That lane represents private schools. The rumble strip can create a bumpy ride or path towards partnerships between public and private education, but the pathway for collaboration exists and partnerships will further maximize opportunities for students. The PIAA District 5 Sports Co-Op List provides an example of how these relationships can thrive.

The outside lane on the other side represents charter schools. As public schools, establishing partnerships and increasing collaboration to benefit students should be accessible. However, existing public policy and statutory distinctions make it difficult to optimize collaboration with charter schools. For example, during COVID, many school districts had to start providing remote learning options for their students from scratch—completely reinventing the wheel, when billions of taxpayer dollars went to build the robust online programs and platforms of cyber charter schools. Focusing on breaking down this artificial barrier to allow for partnerships in the provision of services or even to provide individual courses not available in a district would be valuable to all students.

Looking to the future, shared services, partnerships, and collaborations across all types of K-12 education is what will allow us to move forward and give all students in the commonwealth the education they need. Shanksville-Stonycreek School District will continue to move forward providing the best educational opportunities for our students to meet their needs while simultaneously making most of every dollar we are given whether through local, state, or federal funding sources. We thank you for giving us the time to share our story and hope that it helps aid the Commission in moving forward in the most positive manner possible to provide the best for all students Pennsylvania.

Sidney Clark
Attachment #1

PIAA District 5 Co-ops

as of 9/21/2023

Host School	Sport	Sending School
Bedford High School	Boys Cross Country	Everett Area High School
Bedford High School	Girls Cross Country	Everett Area High School
Berlin Brothers Valley High School	Boys Soccer	Meyersdale Area High School, Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Berlin Brothers Valley High School	Girls Soccer	Meyersdale Area High School, Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Berlin Brothers Valley High School	Boys Wrestling	Rockwood Area High School, Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Berlin Brothers Valley High School	Football	Rockwood Area High School, Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Berlin Brothers Valley Middle School	Boys Soccer	Meyersdale Area Middle School, Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School
Berlin Brothers Valley Middle School	Boys Wrestling	Rockwood Area Junior High, Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School
Berlin Brothers Valley Middle School	Football	Rockwood Area Junior High, Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School
Berlin Brothers Valley Middle School	Boys Track and Field	Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School
Berlin Brothers Valley Middle School	Girls Track and Field	Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School
Chestnut Ridge High School	Boys Soccer	Claysburg Kimmel High School
Chestnut Ridge High School	Girls Soccer	Claysburg Kimmel High School
Chestnut Ridge High School	Boys Track and Field	Claysburg Kimmel High School, FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Girls Track and Field	Claysburg Kimmel High School, FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Baseball	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Boys Basketball	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Boys Golf	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Boys Rifle	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Boys Wrestling	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Football	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Girls Basketball	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Girls Golf	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Girls Rifle	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Girls Volleyball	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Girls' Tennis	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge High School	Softball	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Boys Soccer	Claysburg Kimmel Junior High School, FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

PIAA District 5 Co-ops

as of 9/21/2023

Bedford High School	Boys Cross Country	Everett Area High School
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Boys Track and Field	Claysburg Kimmel Junior High School, FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Girls Track and Field	Claysburg Kimmel Junior High School, FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Baseball	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Boys Basketball	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Boys Golf	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Boys Wrestling	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Football	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Girls Basketball	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Girls Golf	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Girls' Tennis	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Chestnut Ridge Middle School	Softball	FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Baseball	Johnstown Christian High School
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Girls Volleyball	Johnstown Christian High School
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Softball	Johnstown Christian High School
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Boys Track and Field	Johnstown Christian High School, North Star High School
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Girls Track and Field	Johnstown Christian High School, North Star High School
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Football	Johnstown Christian High School, Shade High School
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Boys Rifle	Johnstown Christian High School, Windber Area High School
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Girls Rifle	Johnstown Christian High School, Windber Area High School
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Boys Wrestling	Shade High School, Windber Area High School
Conemaugh Township Area High School	Boys Golf	Windber Area High School
Conemaugh Township Area Middle School	Baseball	Johnstown Christian Middle School
Conemaugh Township Area Middle School	Girls Volleyball	Johnstown Christian Middle School
Conemaugh Township Area Middle School	Softball	Johnstown Christian Middle School
Conemaugh Township Area Middle School	Boys Track and Field	Johnstown Christian Middle School, North Star Middle School
Conemaugh Township Area Middle School	Girls Track and Field	Johnstown Christian Middle School, North Star Middle School
Conemaugh Township Area Middle School	Football	Johnstown Christian Middle School, Shade Junior High School
Conemaugh Township Area Middle School	Boys Wrestling	Shade Junior High School, Windber Area Middle School
Everett Area High School	Boys Rifle	Bedford High School
Everett Area High School	Boys Golf	Forbes Road High School
Everett Area High School	Girls Golf	Forbes Road High School
Everett Area High School	Boys Wrestling	Southern Fulton High School
Everett Area Junior High School	Boys Wrestling	Southern Fulton Junior High School
Forbes Road High School	Boys Soccer	Tussey Mountain High School

PIAA District 5 Co-ops

as of 9/21/2023

Bedford High School	Boys Cross Country	Everett Area High School
Forbes Road Junior High School	Field Hockey	Southern Huntingdon County Junior High School
James Buchanan High School	Boys Swimming and Diving	Fannett Metal High School, McConnellsburg High School
James Buchanan High School	Girls Swimming and Diving	Fannett Metal High School, McConnellsburg High School
James Buchanan High School	Boys Wrestling	McConnellsburg High School
James Buchanan High School	Football	McConnellsburg High School
Johnstown Christian High School	Boys Cross Country	Conemaugh Township Area High School
Johnstown Christian High School	Girls Cross Country	Conemaugh Township Area High School
Johnstown Christian Middle School	Boys Cross Country	Conemaugh Township Area Middle School
Johnstown Christian Middle School	Girls Cross Country	Conemaugh Township Area Middle School
Johnstown Christian Middle School	Boys Soccer	Shade Junior High School
McConnellsburg High School	Boys Track and Field	Forbes Road High School
McConnellsburg High School	Girls Track and Field	Forbes Road High School
McConnellsburg High School	Boys Golf	Southern Fulton High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Boys Cross Country	Berlin Brothers Valley High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Girls Cross Country	Berlin Brothers Valley High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Baseball	Salisbury Elk Lick High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Boys Track and Field	Salisbury Elk Lick High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Girls Basketball	Salisbury Elk Lick High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Girls Track and Field	Salisbury Elk Lick High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Boys Wrestling	Salisbury Elk Lick High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Area High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Football	Salisbury Elk Lick High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Area High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Boys Rifle	Somerset Christian High School
Meyersdale Area High School	Girls Rifle	Somerset Christian High School
Meyersdale Area Middle School	Baseball	Salisbury Elk Lick Junior High School
Meyersdale Area Middle School	Boys Track and Field	Salisbury Elk Lick Junior High School
Meyersdale Area Middle School	Girls Basketball	Salisbury Elk Lick Junior High School
Meyersdale Area Middle School	Girls Track and Field	Salisbury Elk Lick Junior High School
Meyersdale Area Middle School	Softball	Salisbury Elk Lick Junior High School
Meyersdale Area Middle School	Boys Wrestling	Salisbury Elk Lick Junior High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Middle School
Meyersdale Area Middle School	Football	Salisbury Elk Lick Junior High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Middle School
North Star High School	Baseball	Somerset Christian High School
North Star High School	Girls Soccer	Somerset Christian High School

PIAA District 5 Co-ops

as of 9/21/2023

Bedford High School	Boys Cross Country	Everett Area High School
North Star Middle School	Boys Soccer	Somerset Christian School
North Star Middle School	Girls Soccer	Somerset Christian School
Northern Bedford County High School	Boys Cross Country	Tussey Mountain High School
Northern Bedford County High School	Girls Cross Country	Tussey Mountain High School
Northern Bedford County Middle School	Boys Cross Country	Tussey Mountain Junior High School
Northern Bedford County Middle School	Girls Cross Country	Tussey Mountain Junior High School
Rockwood Area High School	Boys Golf	Salisbury Elk Lick High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Area High School
Rockwood Area High School	Boys Soccer	Salisbury Elk Lick High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Area High School
Rockwood Area High School	Girls Golf	Salisbury Elk Lick High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Area High School
Rockwood Area High School	Girls Soccer	Salisbury Elk Lick High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Area High School
Rockwood Area High School	Boys Track and Field	Turkeyfoot Valley Area High School
Rockwood Area High School	Girls Track and Field	Turkeyfoot Valley Area High School
Rockwood Area High School	Girls Volleyball	Turkeyfoot Valley Area High School
Rockwood Area Junior High	Boys Soccer	Salisbury Elk Lick Junior High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Middle School
Rockwood Area Junior High	Girls Soccer	Salisbury Elk Lick Junior High School, Turkeyfoot Valley Middle School
Rockwood Area Junior High	Boys Track and Field	Turkeyfoot Valley Middle School
Rockwood Area Junior High	Girls Track and Field	Turkeyfoot Valley Middle School
Rockwood Area Junior High	Girls Volleyball	Turkeyfoot Valley Middle School
Shade High School	Boys Cross Country	Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Shade High School	Boys Track and Field	Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Shade High School	Girls Basketball	Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Shade High School	Girls Cross Country	Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Shade High School	Girls Track and Field	Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Shade High School	Girls Volleyball	Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Shade High School	Softball	Shanksville Stonycreek High School
Shade Junior High School	Boys Cross Country	Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School
Shade Junior High School	Girls Cross Country	Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School
Shade Junior High School	Girls Volleyball	Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School
Shanksville Stonycreek High School	Boys Golf	Berlin Brothers Valley High School, Shade High School
Shanksville Stonycreek High School	Girls' Tennis	Berlin Brothers Valley High School, Shade High School
Shanksville Stonycreek High School	Baseball	Shade High School

PIAA District 5 Co-ops

as of 9/21/2023

Bedford High School	Boys Cross Country	Everett Area High School
Shanksville Stonycreek High School	Boys Basketball	Shade High School
Shanksville Stonycreek High School	Boys Rifle	Shade High School
Shanksville Stonycreek High School	Girls Competitive Spirit	Shade High School
Shanksville Stonycreek High School	Girls Rifle	Shade High School
Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School	Baseball	Shade Junior High School
Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School	Boys Basketball	Shade Junior High School
Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School	Girls Basketball	Shade Junior High School
Shanksville Stonycreek Junior High School	Softball	Shade Junior High School
Southern Fulton High School	Boys Cross Country	McConnellsburg High School
Southern Fulton High School	Girls Cross Country	McConnellsburg High School
Southern Huntingdon County Junior High School	Boys Wrestling	Fannett Metal Middle School, Forbes Road Junior High School
Southern Huntingdon County Senior High School	Boys Wrestling	Fannett Metal High School, Forbes Road High School
Tussey Mountain High School	Boys Golf	Northern Bedford County High School
Tussey Mountain High School	Boys Tennis	Northern Bedford County High School
Tussey Mountain High School	Girls Golf	Northern Bedford County High School
Windber Area High School	Boys Tennis	Conemaugh Township Area High School
Windber Area High School	Girls' Tennis	Conemaugh Township Area High School

Sidney Clark
Attachment #2

Pennsylvania School Boards Association

Education Research & Policy Center

psba SM

Merger/Consolidation of School Districts:

Does it save money and improve student achievement?

April 2009

Merger/Consolidation of School Districts:

Does it save money and improve student achievement?

psba

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Merger/Consolidation of School Districts:

Does it save money and improve student achievement?

Executive Summary

Pennsylvania's Gov. Edward G. Rendell entered the state into a debate about consolidation of school districts as part of his budget address to the legislature in February 2009. The governor recommended the wholesale consolidation in the number of school districts from 501 to 100.

The Pennsylvania School Boards Association recognizes that there are some districts that may ultimately need to merge with an adjacent district. PSBA has and will continue to support local school district choice because of the significant local impact of school district merger. PSBA made a commitment to local choice by contracting with the Pennsylvania Economy League to produce a merger checklist for school districts interested in examining the potential. The full PEL report is available on the PSBA Web site at www.psba.org.

PSBA has and will continue to support local school district choice because of the significant local impact of school district merger.

Beginning with the new school fiscal year starting July 2009, Pennsylvania will have its first merger since the legislatively mandated consolidations of the 1960s and the federal court ordered merger of five districts into one during the 1970s. This is the voluntary merger of Center and Monaca school districts in Beaver County into Central Valley School District that took more than two-and-a-half years to achieve.

Merger and consolidation have been used interchangeably in the debate. For purposes of this paper, "merger" is combining two or three districts while "consolidation" implies either the wholesale reduction of the number of school districts or the closure of buildings.

The national debate, like the one in Pennsylvania, focuses on two key arguments to justify consolidation of school districts:

- The potential to save money or, as Gov. Rendell suggested, a means of helping to ease the burden on property taxpayers.
- To improve student education/achievement.

Examining Pennsylvania's forced consolidation of school districts in the 1960s provides little factual data concerning the financial, political and educa-

tional aspects of this mandate. What is known is that during the 1960s, there was a decline in the number of districts from 2,277 to 669. This was followed by a second decline in the 1970s from 669 to 505 districts. The 505 were reduced to 501 as the result of federal antidiscrimination litigation that lasted from 1970 to 1981. Analysis of the last merger shows that the total salary dollars, as well as total expenditures, increased.

There is no evidence that consolidation of schools will result in reduced expenses.

Nationally, there are currently 12 states with initiatives or legislative mandates concerning merger and consolidation. Among these states, four are clearly targeting merger to eliminate smaller schools with the goal of saving money.

The results of the 1960s consolidation were, both nationally and in Pennsylvania:

- The addition of full-time elementary school principals (to improve supervision).
- Larger systems or administrative units.
  - Some school entities became so large that students, parents and faculty felt that schools had become bureaucratic and depersonalized.
  - Most districts were required to rebuild a sense of community.
  - Some districts needed to build more facilities to accommodate the larger student enrollments and later needed to close schools when school-age population declined.
- High schools became community centers in rural areas.

There is no evidence that consolidation of schools will result in reduced expenses. The analysis of Woodland Hills shows cost increases. Analysis of a potential merger of York County School Districts shows that substantial tax increases would be necessary. Consolidations that have occurred have not produced the promised savings. Rather, consolidations and mergers have substantial front-end costs, such as "leveling up." Also, there are a number of items that provide front-end costs that individually are small but collectively can approach substantial sums in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The evidence shows that consolidations have an adverse impact on academic achievement. The studies by a number of researchers around the nation have documented no improvement. Rather, they have confirmed adverse impact on student performance.

Consolidations also have produced a sense of loss of community. This loss forced districts in Pennsylvania to rebuild the sense of community as the result of the mergers in the 1960s.

Pennsylvania school boards have gone to extensive lengths regarding due diligence in studying the potential for merger. The failure of districts to complete the merger has produced increased cooperation between districts. In the case of Millersburg-Halifax discussions in Dauphin County, the motion in both districts was to reject merger, but it did contain provisions to seek additional ways to expand cooperation between districts. Similar cooperative efforts have occurred between districts in other merger discussions.

Merger has substantial impact on local communities, both financially and educationally. Because of the local impact, local choice is the critical element to a successful merger. As part of the success of merger, due diligence in merger discussions is critical.

Where mergers have been studied, the result often has been a rejection of merger. However, as the Millersburg-Halifax case shows, such studies can and do lead to greater cooperation.

Research findings:

The merger/consolidation research shows:

- There are no documented cases of financial savings from merger/consolidation.
- Merger/consolidation has had a negative impact on student achievement.
- The potential for adverse economic impact on smaller communities that lose facilities exists.

Recommendations:

The conclusions of the analysis indicate that several specific needs exist in attempting to address school district mergers. PSBA has and will continue to support local district choice related to merger/consolidation. PSBA recommends the following actions to improve the process:

- **Legislative mandates for consolidations or mergers are not sound policy and should not occur because:**
  - They do not have the necessary due diligence outlined in Appendix A.
  - They do not have the necessary input from those directly affected.
  - The research shows adverse student achievement.
  - The research shows no documented savings.
  - There is a lack of consideration for geographic and demographic elements of the resulting school districts.
- **Mergers have substantial local impact, and local districts need to have a clear voice in the ultimate result.**
- **If the state wants to reduce the number of districts, it needs to encourage merger by providing incentives and assistance, such as:**
  - Funding for front-end costs.
  - Financial assistance to address "leveling up," or legislative relief.
  - Technical assistance to districts for merger studies.
  - Technical and financial assistance with curriculum alignment.
  - Financial assistance to cover administrative costs, such as letterhead, name changes, etc.
- **The Center-Monaca merger identified the lack of a clearly defined process for completing the merger. The state needs to formalize and document the process used by Center-Monaca for other districts interested in merger, such as:**
  - Clearly define the process required by the Secretary of Education.
  - Clearly define the process required by the State Board of Education.

Merger/Consolidation of School Districts:

Does it save money and improve student achievement?

Nationally, increasing school taxes, student test score debates, political action/taxpayer groups, declining enrollments and communities in transition, along with many other elements, are combining to generate either considerable debate or legislative action to reduce the number of school districts.

Pennsylvania's Gov. Edward G. Rendell entered the state into a debate over the consolidation of school districts as part of his budget address to the legislature in February 2009. The governor recommended the wholesale consolidation of the number of school districts from 501 to 100. No reason was given for the choice of 100 districts.

While the governor is proposing consolidation starting in July 2009, Pennsylvania will have its first merger (a voluntary merger) since the legislatively mandated consolidation of the 1960s and the federal court-ordered merger of five districts into one during the 1970s.

The national debate, like the one in Pennsylvania, also focuses on two key arguments to justify consolidation of school districts:

- The potential to save money, or as Gov. Rendell suggested, a means of helping to ease the burden on property taxpayers.
- To improve student education/achievement.

Unfortunately, school boards and legislatures have made many of the consolidation decisions with little or no substantial evidence to support their arguments. This paper examines the history of merger/consolidation and what the research shows regarding merger/consolidation. There are also a number of recommendations related to merger.

Is the term 'merger' or 'consolidation'?[1]

The words merger and consolidation often are used interchangeably in the debate. And, like any other debate, the terms being used can mask the intent of those pushing for merger and, therefore, require clear definition. Will districts be merged or consolidated? Does proposed merger include the consolidation of buildings? Under municipal law in Pennsylvania (Act 90 of 1994), "consolidation" means the elimination of existing governmental entities and creation of a new governmental entity, while "merger" means one of the governmental entities from the original group remains.

In school terms, merger implies the combining of two or more districts with the intent of eliminating an administrative group and/or duplicate programs. Consolidation implies wholesale reduction in the number of districts and closure of buildings including elimination of duplicate programs and elimination of staff. Unfortunately, the history of school merger shows that there is little difference in outcomes. This may be a case of a difference without distinction. **For this paper, merger implies the combination of two or three districts while the term consolidation implies the wholesale reduction in the number of districts.**

[1] This section is reprinted from an article appearing in the *PSBA Bulletin*, published by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, December 2006.

A brief history of merger/consolidation

The National Center for Education Statistics began keeping track of the number of U.S. schools and districts beginning with the 1937-38 school year. The Pennsylvania Department of Education also has maintained data on the number of districts dating to the 1900s. NCES data show that more than 117,000 school districts operated in the U.S. in 1937-38. These districts supported about 250,000 public school buildings. Over the ensuing 60 years, the number declined to fewer than 15,000 districts. During this same 60-year period, the number of school buildings declined by almost 158,000, to just more than 92,000 buildings at present. As district/building reductions occurred, the number of public school students almost doubled (from just more than 25 million to almost 50 million). This change has been characterized as moving from an era of one-room schools to consolidated schools. A smaller number of administrative structures support the smaller number of consolidated schools. This does not necessarily mean fewer administrators.

Table 1
Number of school districts in Pennsyvania
(10-year intervals)

School Year	Number of Districts	Change in Districts
1899-00	2,510	--
1909-10	2,599	89
1919-20	2,590	(9)
1929-30	2,585	(5)
1939-40	2,552	(33)
1949-50	2,530	(22)
1959-60	2,277	(253)
1969-70	669	(1,608)
1979-80	505	(164)
1989-90	501	(4)
1999-00	501	--
2009-10**	500	(1)

** Reflects the merger of Center Area SD and Monaca SD into Central Valley SD.
Source: PA Department of Education, Division of Educational Statistics

Pennsylvania followed a similar pattern, as shown in Table 1. The largest decline in the number of districts occurred as the result of a series of three separate legislative actions in the 1960s. Act 561 of 1961 attempted to reduce the number of districts to one-fourth of the then existing 2,277 districts. Act 299 of 1963, which amended Act 561 of 1961, added incentives for consolidation by providing for special payments to union and merged districts, as well as jointures and newly established school districts. Act 150 of 1968 amended both Acts 561 and 299 by providing for additional consolidations for those districts that were not included in previous consolidations.

The number of districts in Pennsylvania was reduced from a high of 2,599 in 1909-10 to 505 in 1979-80. The final reduction from 505 to 501 was the result of a federal desegregation lawsuit involving five districts in Allegheny County. Consolidation in the 1960s required three separate pieces of legislation to achieve consolidation that serves to highlight the significance of politics in the process. The extent of financial incentives included in Act 299 of 1963 shows the importance of economic incentives for merger/consolidation.

Beginning with the school fiscal year 2009-10, the number of districts in Pennsylvania will decline by one as the result of the merger of Center and Monaca school districts in Beaver County into the Central Valley School District. The Central Valley merger is the first voluntary merger in the state.

Analysis of the 1960s consolidation

The legislative mandate for consolidation and school reorganization in the 1960s was called a mixed blessing. PSBA, in "The First 150 Years of Education in Pennsylvania," described the consolidation as follows:

> "In retrospect, the passage of Act 299 was a mixed blessing. The larger school districts did provide for economies of scale, as Conant had indicated.[2] The merging of various elementary school programs assured greater uniformity. Supervision was improved, particularly in the elementary schools, for with larger schools

[2] Conant is in reference to "The Conant Report" issued in 1958. The Carnegie Corporation of New York had commissioned a study in early 1957 of the American high school. James Bryant Conant was the chief investigator.

it was possible to separate the functions of teaching and administration to have full-time elementary school principals.

"Perhaps a major unexpected consequence of the larger administrative units was in gradually building a spirit of community. Particularly in rural areas, the high schools became community centers with which the people in the geographical region identified. The concepts of larger units to provide for functional education applied in the 1960s and 1970s as area vocational-technical schools were supported.

"But there have been negatives in the operation of school district reorganization. In some cases, the school entities were so large that students and faculty felt that schools had become bureaucratic and depersonalized. School districts overbuilt and were forced to close schools when school-age population declined in the 1970s and 1980s.

"...Ironically, American education is engaged in an analysis and critique similar to that of the late 1950s and early 1960s. We would do well to review the conditions and actions of 20 years ago before moving too rapidly in mid-1980-style school reform."[3]

Again in 2009, the debate of the mid-1960s and the mid- 1980s is occurring, and a review of the conditions and actions of the 1960s is still not complete.

PA school board role in merger

The merger of Center Area and Monaca school districts occurred under current law.[4] The issue of merger can be raised by any of a number of stakeholders as demonstrated by the governor. Stakeholders include other board members and other districts, along with residents, administrators, legislators, the general public or the media. Does raising the level of debate require a school board to act? The obvious answer is no, unless the legislature mandates such action. However, discussions of school district merger should be reviewed carefully. What may look like an easy choice may not be as obvious as it appears.

Under Pennsylvania law, most often school boards are the final decision-makers about merger actions pertaining to their own district. However, as was experienced in Pennsylvania during the 1960s, or as the result of court action, districts can be forced to merge.

The Pennsylvania School Code (24 P.S. 2-224) provides that two or more districts may merge based on an affirmative vote of each of the individual district boards. While there are some additional actions and a review by the State Board of Education, the ultimate future of the district rests with the local school boards. Pursuant to the School Code (24 P.S. 2-225), all assets (property and taxes receivable) and liabilities (outstanding debt and unpaid obligations) become the responsibility of the resulting merged district. There are no special exceptions for, or specific language related to, the continuation and resulting combination of labor contracts.

Board responsibility for 'due diligence'

The clearly defined responsibility of Pennsylvania school boards in the merger of districts sets a clear requirement that school boards have routinely undertaken due diligence as part of any discussion. This due diligence takes place in three parts. The first is serious discussion about the potential for merger. This is followed by formal study, with the third part being implementation of the merger.

In a report by the Pennsylvania Economy League commissioned by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, PEL identified a series of actions that are essential to undertaking the due-diligence process for merger. A summary checklist of actions is presented in Appendix A of this paper, and details appear on the PSBA Web site, www.psba.org.

Over the past 20 years, there have been a number of studies related to district merger. The discussions related to the potential for merger exceed the number of studies actually performed.

[3] "The First 150 Years of Education in Pennsylvania," PSBA, Harrisburg, PA, November 1984. The publication was written by Dr. Robert L. Leight.

[4] Current law is defined in the Pennsylvania School Code 24 P.S. Section 2-224. The only requirement is an affirmative vote of the school boards of all districts to be merged and the approval of the Secretary of Education for Pennsylvania along with approval of the State Board of Education.

The Center Area-Monaca merger had at least one prior study.[5]

Over the past several years, PSBA has been involved in discussions with other districts that initiated public discussion of voluntary mergers. These discussions included South Eastern Greene, Carmichaels and Jefferson-Morgan school districts in Greene County; Clarion and Clarion-Limestone districts in Clarion County; and Millersburg Area, Halifax and Upper Dauphin districts in Dauphin County. Among these three merger discussions, only Millersburg Area and Halifax school districts moved on to a formal study.[6] The result of the study was a vote by both school boards against merger but to continue cooperative efforts in areas identified in the study.[7]

The argument that consolidation saves money is based on the premise of economy of scale.

The governor's proposed consolidation of school districts does not include the necessary due diligence required of the local school boards. The governor's proposal calls for legislative study and action to implement and a failure by the legislature to implement results in deferral to the governor's office for action. In either case, the recommendation does not include the detailed due diligence outlined in Appendix A.

Recent action in other states

According to the National Council of State Legislatures, as supported by follow-up with several state school boards associations, 12 states have active proposals or legislation on reducing the number of districts and/or buildings. Some of the legislative initiatives encourage merged districts and consolidation buildings. Some states mandate merger of districts and consolidation of buildings.

Appendix B presents a brief summary of the proposals on merger/consolidation for the various states. In most states where legislation has been enacted, the focus is the elimination of small school buildings and/or districts. This legislative action implies that larger districts/buildings are more cost effective and produce better academic results compared with small districts/buildings.

Among the 12 states shown in Appendix B, four are clearly targeting consolidation to eliminate smaller school districts. Two of the states are focusing on consolidation efforts to combine elementary and secondary districts into K-12 districts. Only one state is providing financial support for consolidation. Two states are imposing financial penalties for not consolidating.

According to Dale Douglass, executive director of the Maine School Boards Association, the legislation forcing merger of districts in Maine "contained a provision for local districts to vote to reject merger." He noted that this provision also contained what could be termed a "poison pill" by forcing financial penalties on the local taxpayers. At present, there are still 218 of the original 290 districts in Maine; many of the remaining districts voted to reject merger, according to documentation from the Maine School Superintendents Association.[8]

While there were state-level reports in many of these states recommending merger of districts, there was no reference to local or public input. As exhibited in Maine, when given the choice, the local districts chose to accept the financial penalty to maintain local control.

The political arguments for merger

There are two interesting results presented in the research. Advocates for merger have offered that merger would:

- Save money through improved efficiency resulting from economies of scale.
- Improve student outcomes by providing greater access to educational resources.

A subset of the save-money argument includes:

- Need for fewer buildings.

[5] Statement made by Dr. Dan Matsook, superintendent of Center Area SD, during the October 2008 PASA-PSBA School Leadership Conference.
[6] Merger status was verified with phone conversations with district staff in January 2009. The Millersburg-Halifax study was completed in February 2008 by the Pennsylvania Economy League and Hayes Large Architects.
[7] Status verified by phone call with the districts in February 2009.
[8] Correspondence provided by Victoria Wallack, communications director, Maine School Superintendents Association, dated March 6, 2009.

- Need for fewer superintendents and other key positions.
- Better allocation of teachers to offer additional courses.

Financial savings: What does the research offer?

The primary reason for merger/consolidation offered by those advocating for district merger/consolidation is alleged financial savings. The studies that are available regarding a proposed merger typically reflect potential savings, yet there is an obvious absence of documented follow-up financial analysis to determine if the alleged savings actually materialized. According to the information as presented in Appendix B, three states viewed consolidation as a means of saving money.

The argument that consolidation saves money is based on the premise of economy of scale. Under this premise, it is assumed that larger is more efficient, and therefore, savings will accrue by making districts and buildings larger. Catherine Reilly (2004) indicates that as the number of pupils increases from a very low point, the cost per pupil declines but reaches a point of leveling off followed by increase in per pupil costs, producing a diseconomy of scale. Available research has focused more on the size of buildings than districts. None of the research has addressed legal requirements imposed upon districts in regard to staffing requirements. Allan Odden and Larry Picus offer: "Analysts, however, argue that the expected cost savings from massive school and district consolidation have not been realized."[9]

Among rural schools, costs per pupil may decline as the result of merger. However, these cost savings may be offset by increased transportation costs. The Standard & Poor's analysis, in its June 2007 study for the Pennsylvania Legislature, suggested the potential for merger among many rural districts. The study did not include the impact of transportation or any analysis of debt financing requirements. The S&P study also ignored salary schedule differences between districts.

A study by the Nevada Policy Research Institute reported another financial aspect of merger: "...as school district size increases, the percent of budgets spent on teachers, books and materials actually tends to decline." The implication is that when districts are merged, the total dollars expended do not increase proportionally when students are added. Rather, resources remain constant and are distributed across more students (Schmidt and Schlottmann, 2005).

John Wenders, in a Fordham Foundation Report (2003), notes, "If the history of public education tells us anything, district consolidation and the inevitable school consolidation that follows are generally both bad ideas. In the short run, consolidation promises lower costs and taxes and better student performance. But neither happens."

The study of merger for Millersburg Area SD with Halifax SD was rejected by both school boards. The primary reason was the financial impact of leveling up salaries and the failure of staffing realignments to provide for additional educational opportunities for students of the merged district.[10]

Student achievement: What does the research offer?

As part of the research on merger/consolidation and student achievement, there are consistent reports that mergers of districts usually result in buildings being closed. The result of building closings is an examination of student outcomes in the larger buildings.

One study (Howley, Howley and Johnson, 2002) examined scores on seven state-required tests in every Arkansas school consolidation and concluded that:

- The small schools in high-poverty communities produced higher student achievement than the larger consolidated buildings.
- Higher achievement in small schools narrowed the gap between students from affluent and poor communities.
- Small schools are more effective against poverty when they were part of small districts.
- Poverty exerts a larger detrimental effect in large schools in large districts.

[9] Odden, Allan R., and Picus, Lawrence O. "School Finance: A Policy Perspective," Fourth Edition, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2008, Chapter 4, Page 91.

[10] Sherri-Lee Knorr, superintendent, Millersburg ASD, estimated that the cost of leveling up salaries was about $500,000. The staff realignment analysis indicated that no expansion of programs was possible with current staff.

- Smaller schools significantly counteracted poverty's power to lower student achievement.
- By eighth grade, poverty disappears as a factor in student performance in smaller schools.

A study by the Manhattan Institute (Greene and Winters, 2005) found that decreasing the size of school districts has a substantial and statistically significant positive effect on graduation rates. Conversely, consolidation of school districts produces larger units and leads to more students dropping out of high school. In this study, the apparent reason for the beneficial effect was the ability of parents to choose among a greater number of small districts. A 2002 study commissioned by the Washington State School Directors' Association (Martin et al, 2002) replicated the findings of a study involving Georgia.[11]

Students in larger schools tend to be more disconnected, which often requires special programs to address dropouts and discipline.

An article in the *American School Boards Journal* (Black, 2006) states that, "data from the Matthew Project indicate that students from impoverished communities benefit from attending small schools, which are often rural. On the other hand, students from affluent communities tend to benefit from larger schools."

Some studies that focus on outcomes (such as achievement, completion and attendance) often recommend smaller buildings or districts (Howley, 1994). Howley also concluded that research based on inputs (e.g., teacher salaries, instructional materials, specialized staffing) usually recommend merger or consolidation.

The appropriate size of buildings often becomes the focus of discussion where merger has occurred. The National Association of Secondary School Principals in its study, "Breaking Ranks," makes the key point that students learn best in schools with about 600 students.

Rural school districts have in some cases taken the lead in incorporating technology to address student achievement and expand educational opportunities. This has been clearly demonstrated across Pennsylvania with the implementation of blendedschools.net and other technological application to curriculum. These approaches take a shared or cooperative approach but do have associated costs.

Sense of 'community': What does the research offer?

Several articles address "community." Community includes access by stakeholders to those in control, identifiable elements of the school population, student participation in extracurricular activities and various other socioeconomic components. As districts and schools become larger, those who make decisions affecting the population become more removed from those most affected. The element of distance between decision-makers and those affected is critical to local control. This loss of local control becomes very important when considering the potential benefits of consolidation. Wenders (2003) notes, "Over the longer haul, consolidation sucks power upward, and away from parents, students and local conditions, to centralized political arrangements where unions and other special interests have more political clout."

In smaller schools, most staff knows the students by name. Studies by Howley, Raywid and others have found that in larger schools, the sense of belonging and cohesiveness is diminished. Students in larger schools tend to be more disconnected, which often requires special programs to address dropouts and discipline. The lack of a sense of community and the related connection in larger schools exacerbate limited opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities. After all, there are only so many roles in the class play and positions on various athletic teams.

Raywid (1999) observes that studies based on the value of community usually recommend sizes smaller than those based on outcomes. Thus, researchers and policy analysts who are most concerned with community (Sergiovanni, 1994) will tend to recommend the smaller schools for nearly everyone, while those concerned with outcomes often will recommend larger

[11] The Matthew Project, Bickel and Howley, 2002, regarding student performance and size of buildings in merged districts. Georgia was part of the Matthew Project.

schools, except for a select portion of the population for which they will recommend small schools.

According to Raywid (1996), "Research evidence is strong that small schools benefit the entire school community. Small schools are particularly beneficial for disadvantaged youth, who profit from the extra attention and the sense of belonging promoted in a small school."

A recent study by Johnson (2002) for the Rural School and Community Trust looked at the impact of the consolidation in Arkansas. The Arkansas law required school districts with fewer than 350 students to merge administrations with another district. The law also required buildings with fewer than 350 students to be consolidated with other buildings. About one-third of the buildings in the merged districts were closed. According to the study, merger of districts and associated school consolidation often leads to destruction of the sense of community. The report further indicated that building closure tended to lead to a period of economic decline in those areas that lost buildings.

In a PEL study of a potential merger in the late 1980s for the districts of Meyersdale and Salisbury-Elk Lick in Somerset County, the Meyersdale School Board was concerned with the adverse economic impact of the potential closure of the Meyersdale building.[12]

ing agreements occurred after the mergers of the 1960s reduced the number of potential bargaining groups. During the merger debates of the 1950s and 1960s, both nationally and in Pennsylvania, the National Education Association was a strong advocate of consolidation. Prior to these mergers, there was a statewide salary schedule. This schedule was a minimum schedule with steps based on seniority and columns based on education level and duties. Experience from the mergers of the 1960s provides the basis for "leveling up" of salaries.

The "leveling up" of salaries is tied to the Pennsylvania School Code. The School Code requires that teachers may not be terminated for financial reasons. The School Code also provides that a reduction in salary constitutes a demotion and provides for an administrative hearing, with limited reasons for demotion.[14]

Table 2 presents some limited personnel and related salary data from the last merger in Pennsylvania for analyzing the impact of "leveling up." The districts of Churchill Area, Edgewood, General Braddock, Swissvale Area and Turtle Creek Area were merged into Woodland Hills as part of a federal court desegregation lawsuit. This merger occurred during the transition of a state-required school accounting system and thus, limited data is available during the initial merger years. Litigation and resulting federal court involvement over the merger spanned a 10-year time period, and the court's final order implementing merger began with the 1981-82 school year.

Table 2
Financial Analysis of the Woodland Hills Merger

Year	Professional Payroll	Total Professional Staff	Total Expenditures	Average Daily Membership
1976-77	$10,286,862	749	$20,104,726	10,031
1979-80	$11,252,729	665	$25,324,379	8,873
1980-81	$11,601,580	629	$23,154,266	9,008
1984-85	$14,307,160	542	$31,470,677	6,923

Source: PA Dept of Education, Statistical reports for years included in table

Salary schedule differences in Pennsylvania – 'Leveling up'

Analysis of merger in Pennsylvania will need to address salary schedule differences. Under Pennsylvania law, school districts have the obligation to negotiate labor agreements. Each district is its own unique bargaining unit, and as such, there are currently 500 different collective bargaining agreements.[13] It is interesting to note that the development of unions and collective bargain-

[12] Meyersdale operates a K-12 building that was older than buildings in Salisbury-Elk Lick. There also was available space to house all of the Meyersdale students in the Salisbury-Elk Lick buildings.

[13] Collective bargaining began about 1970 pursuant to Act 195 of 1970. While there are 501 school districts in Pennsylvania, one district contracts out all of its students; therefore, only 500 collective bargaining agreements exist.

[14] The no layoff and demotion are found in 24 P.S. Section 11-1125 and 11-1151 respectively. Pennsylvania law does not permit demotion (defined as including reduction in pay) of employees without due process.

In the Woodland Hills merger, the average daily membership and total professional staff declined pre-merger to post-merger, based on the available data shown in Table 2. While there may have been some savings from a reduction in the number of staff, the total payroll costs increased, and this seems almost counterintuitive. Likewise, the total expenditures increased while the average daily membership continued to decline.

At the time of the Woodland Hills merger, all districts involved had been unionized with established labor contracts for professional staff that included teachers and other certified personnel. One of the impacts of merger is the consolidation of employees under a single collective bargaining agreement. Under the Pennsylvania School Code (24 P.S. 11-1124), a merger is a permitted reason for reduction of staff, as is alteration of educational programs or a substantial decrease in student enrollment.

Operating under the assumption that the individuals were placed on the higher schedule, an estimate of the increase in salaries to the highest district average is presented in Table 3. The data in Table 2 show an overall increase of payroll of $2,705,580 between 1980-81 and 1984-85, while the adjustment calculated in Table 3 shows in increase of $443,880 in salaries for 1980-81 to 1981-82. Additionally, the data in Table 2 show a decline in the total number of staff from 629 to 542 (a difference of 87). Under state law and typical collective bargaining language, any reduction in staff is based on seniority or, more correctly, the least senior person is out of work. Thus, those who remain tend to be higher on the salary schedule. If all of the least senior staff were equally distributed across all districts, all of the averages would rise proportionally.

Also shown in Table 2 is the increase of total cost, which increased by $8,316,411 between 1980-81 and 1984-85. From the limited financial data available, along with the oversight of the federal district court in implementing the merger, it is unclear where savings resulted and where new/increased expenditures occurred.

If any buildings were closed between 1980-81 and 1984-85, it is likely that a number of these buildings were still owned by the district and being at least minimally maintained, and the cost of additional transportation had substantially increased to offset any savings from reductions in professional staff.

The limited financial data available from the last merger in Pennsylvania suggests that, while financial savings may have been expected, the actual result was increasing payroll costs by an average of $676,395 per year (5.83%).

Over the past 10 years, merger/consolidation has been subject to extensive debate. Beginning in 1996, the *York Daily Record* and York Newspaper Company, along with substantial support from the business community, commissioned a study by David Rusk. The primary focus of the report was to examine the potential for development, address urban sprawl and look at the future of York County. As part of the report, the idea of consolidation, of not only municipal governments, but also of school districts, was presented.

In 2002, the business community revisited the original study. This report, referred to as the Rusk II Report, took direct aim at school district consolidation with the headline: "Staggering dis-

Table 3
Estimate of Payroll Cost Increase Raising District Average to Highest Average

District	1980-81 Payroll	1980-81 Staff	1980-81 Average Salary	Difference to Highest Average	To raise to Highest Average
Churchill	$4,485,700	236	$19,007	143	$33,748
Edgewood	$957,494	50	$19,150	0	$0
Gen. Braddock	$2,607,989	137	$19,036	114	$15,618
Swissvale	$2,081,026	123	$16,919	2,231	$274,413
Turtle Creek	$1,469,371	83	$17,703	1,447	$120,101
Total	$11,601,580	629	N/A	N/A	$443,880

Source: PA Department of Education statistical reports 1980-81

parities between county schools." Here, as with the general literature, the focus is on student performance. Only in this report, a case is made for improving test scores in the City of York through consolidation of school districts. Both Rusk reports created expanded discussion of the potential for merger/consolidation – the second more than the first. While the implication in Rusk II was more direct than Rusk I, the target appears to be a redistribution of tax revenue back to the urban center, rather than a savings of tax dollars. Interestingly, the argument in support of merger/consolidation was improvement in student performance through resource sharing/redistribution.

As part of this discussion, Rep. Ron Miller (R-Dallastown) requested an analysis of the cost of consolidation in York County. While the information was limited, PSBA did prepare an analysis of the impact of merger/consolidation on the average teacher salary and the potential tax impact of such action.

Analysis of a potential York County merger – Teacher salary costs

Appendix C presents the analysis, prepared for Rep. Miller, of the impact of merger based only on teacher salaries. In this case, the salary is based on a combined salary matrix for York County school districts. The combined matrix was based on the highest salary for each step/column of the pay scale. Total bargaining unit membership along with placement for 2005-06 was confirmed with the districts. The resulting calculation was the number of teachers by step/column multiplied by the appropriate salary from the combined matrix, with the totals calculated by district.

Appendix C shows the current salary along with the new salary by column on the combined salary schedule. Because increased expenditures would result in increased contributions for retirement (PSERS) and Social Security/Medicare, increases are calculated. The state funding includes proportional subsidy for these two items. The district share under a merger is assumed to be 50% for this analysis. No assumption was made regarding changes in teaching staff and related redistribution among existing buildings. The average salary would increase from $43,496 to $56,482, or by $12,986 per teacher, merely through consolidation to a single matrix.

Table 4 presents a summary of the tax impact resulting from the increased salary and associated costs. A collection rate of 95% is assumed for the analysis. However, the actual combined collection rate may be slightly lower. The estimate of tax rate impact is based on the amount of revenue required to support the increased salary and associated cost estimate.

Some reduction of teacher cost should be anticipated. However, this would require a detailed analysis of curriculum, a review of building capacity throughout the county and the need to consider redistribution of students and related costs of transportation.

Table 4
Calculation of real estate tax impact
Based on salary schedule change only

Item	Amount	Notes
Taxable Assessed Value	$15,656,921,369	Does not include Dover, West Shore and Northern York County school districts
Value of 1 mill	$15,656,921	
Collection rate	95%	
Estimate 1 mill collected	$14,874,075	
Total Cost Increase	$54,871,929	Does not include Dover, York Vo-Tech, West Shore and Northern York County school districts.
Additional mills countywide to fund the salary, retirement and SS/Medicare increase	3.6891	This would be levied on all properties in the county included in the analysis.

In the Rusk II report, a more regional approach was offered. In the second report, the proposal offered a division of the county along an economic/demographic structure. In this type of merger, it is expected that the cost increase would not be as significant as anticipated under a countywide plan.

Findings in Millersburg Area-Halifax

The financial impact of merging was estimated to exceed $500,000 by the Millersburg Area-Halifax school districts. The situation is associated with the separate collective bargaining agreements. An analysis of the "leveling up" disclosed some surprising elements of the two districts. In one district, the salary schedule was higher in the top steps while the current members of the bargaining unit were at the bottom. In the other district, the reverse occurred: the schedule was higher in the bottom steps with most of the current members at the top of the schedule. The "leveling up" would have provided substantial increases to the staff in both districts, producing the estimate of $500,000.[15] This increase was more than any potential reduction in administrative duplication.

There is no evidence that consolidation of schools will result in reduced expenses.

Other financial issues

There are a number of financial issues that will occur as a merger takes place, usually referred to as front-end costs. Some of these may be only a few hundred dollars while others could be a hundred thousand dollars. But collectively, these costs could be substantial when taken in total. Oftentimes, these costs are not considered until the last stage of merger. Front-end costs include:

- Student-related actions, such as additional textbooks and curriculum materials, if the districts are not using the same books or curriculum.
- Connecting classroom computers between districts and providing for additional software for consistency.
- Revising transportation schedules or rebidding contracts for transportation.
- Cost of labor counsel to renegotiate a consolidated collective bargaining agreement.
- Legal review of existing service contracts, along with making any necessary corrections, amendments or terminations.
- Changes to district signs and letterhead to reflect the new name and logo.
- Additional/new band and athletic uniforms.

Summary

The results of the 1960s consolidation both nationally and in Pennsylvania were:

- The addition of full-time elementary school principals (to improve supervision),
- Larger systems or administrative units:
  - Some school entities became so large that students, parents and faculty felt that schools had become bureaucratic and depersonalized.
  - Most districts were required to rebuild a sense of community.
  - Some districts needed to build more facilities to accommodate the larger student enrollments and later needed to close schools when school-age population declined.
- High schools became community centers in rural areas.

There is no evidence that consolidation of schools will result in reduced expenses. The analysis of Woodland Hills merger shows cost increases. Analysis of potential merger/consolidation of York County school districts shows that substantial tax increases would be necessary. Mergers and consolidations that have occurred have not produced the promised savings. Rather, mergers have substantial front-end costs such as "leveling up." There are also a number of items that provide additional front-end costs that individually may be considered small amounts but collectively can approach substantial sums in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The evidence shows that consolidations have an adverse impact on academic achievement. The

[15] Amount and issue discussed with Sherri-Lee Knorr, superintendent, Millersburg ASD.

studies by a number of researchers around the nation have documented adverse impact on student performance.

Mergers and consolidations have produced a sense of loss of community. This loss forced districts in Pennsylvania to rebuild the sense of community as the result of the mergers in the 1960s.

Pennsylvania school boards have gone to extensive lengths regarding due diligence in studying the potential for merger. The failure of districts to complete a merger has produced increased cooperation between districts. In the case of Millersburg Area-Halifax, the motions in both districts to reject merger contained provisions to seek additional ways to expand cooperation between districts. Similar cooperative efforts between districts resulted from other merger discussions.

While many state legislatures have passed consolidation legislation with the best of intentions, the results have not produced the intended results – saving money or improving student achievement. Merger is a very difficult choice and requires extensive analysis on the part of elected board members, administrators and the community.

Merger has substantial impact on local communities, both financially and educationally. Because of the local impact, local choice is a critical element to a successful merger. As part of the success of merger, due diligence in merger discussions is essential.

Where mergers have been studied, the result often has been a rejection of merger. However, as Millersburg and Halifax show, such studies can and do lead to greater cooperation.

Merger discussions have been productive even when merger was rejected. The productive element is usually expanded cooperation among districts involved in merger discussions.

Recommendations

The conclusions of the analysis indicate that several specific needs exist in attempting to address school district mergers. PSBA has and will continue to support local district choice related to merger/consolidation. PSBA recommends the following actions to improve the process:

- **Legislative mandates for consolidations or mergers are not sound policy and should not occur because:**
  - They do not have the necessary due diligence outlined in Appendix A.
  - They do not have the necessary input from those directly affected.
  - The research shows adverse student achievement.
  - The research shows no documented savings.
  - There is a lack of consideration for geographic and demographic elements of the resulting school districts.
- **Mergers have substantial local impact, and local districts need to have a clear voice in the ultimate result.**
- **Due diligence as outlined in Appendix A must take place.**
- **If the state wants to reduce the number of districts, it needs to encourage merger by providing incentives and assistance, such as:**
  - Funding for front-end costs.
  - Financial assistance to address "leveling up," or legislative relief from certain provisions of the School Code.
  - Technical assistance to districts for merger studies.
  - Technical and financial assistance with curriculum alignment.
  - Financial assistance to cover administrative costs such as letterhead, name changes, etc.
- **The Center Area-Monaca merger identified the lack of a clearly defined process for completing the merger. The state needs to formalize and document the process used by Center Area-Monaca for other districts interested in merger to:**
  - Clearly define the process required by the Secretary of Education.
  - Clearly define the process required by the State Board of Education.

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Appendix A

Appendix A[1]

Checklist Overview

The following checklist directs school districts and communities through data collection and analysis. It provides information for ongoing discussions and presents a common reference point to guide those discussions. **Note:** All data requirements set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to date have been included in this checklist.

Deliberation	Identifying Potential Consolidation Partners	Ally With Districts: Academic Programs
1. Describe current school district environment 2. Generate predictive data 3. Perform an academic self assessment 4. Anticipate significant events or changes 5. Identify advantageous shared resource opportunities	1. District policies and procedures 2. General operations and staff levels 3. List of course offerings 4. Grade configurations 5. Facility capacity and use 6. Enrollment patterns 7. Achievement measures 8. Demographic characteristics and common sense of community	1. General overview 2. Curriculum development 3. Programs by grade level 4. Special education 5. Cross-district schools
Ally With Districts: Student Services	**Ally With Districts: District Governance**	**Ally With Districts: Staffing Patterns and Bargaining Agreements**
1. Student activities 2. Social activities 3. Athletic programs 4. Extracurricular and community programs	1. Administration 2. Strategic planning and curriculum development 3. Education partners 4. Special circumstances	1. Existing staffing 2. Collective bargaining agreements
Ally With Districts: Operations and Facilities	**Ally With Districts: Finances/Tax Base**	**Ally With Districts: Community Involvement**
1. Facility assessment 2. Facility cost estimates 3. Transportation analysis 4. Merging services and district operations	1. District revenues 2. Equalizing the tax base 3. Examining expenditures 4. Communications plan	1. Identify stakeholders 2. Setting expectations 3. Role of the community 4. Communications plan

[1]Prepared for the Pennsylvania School Boards Association by the Pennsylvania Economy League Inc. Full report available on the PSBA Web site at www.psba.org

Appendix B

Appendix B
Consolidation/Merger Proposals
Summary by State

State	Initiative/Legislative Summary
Arizona	In April 2005, the legislature established a School District Redistricting Commission. The SDRC is inviting public participation in its role to develop a plan that will go to the voters in 2008. The SDRC is to review all current common school districts that are not part of a unified school district for potential consolidation.
Arkansas	Arkansas Act 60 (HB 1109) provided for administrative consolidation or annexation, beginning July 1, 2004, of districts with fewer than 350 students.
California	In 2004, a program was established in several counties that authorizes county committee approval authority for petitions for merger.
Illinois	About half of Illinois's 889 districts are K-12. Currently, an elementary-only district is permitted to merge with the secondary attendance district but only by approval of all elementary districts using the secondary district. Proposed change: districts disapproving of merger would have five years to either change their mind or find another high school. The proposal also would allow elementary districts that feed the same high school district to merge even if the districts are not contiguous.
Iowa	A report of an education commission to study whether there should be a minimum size requirement for school districts was due to the legislature in 2007.
Kansas	A January 2006 report recommended two new alternatives for funding schools. The study has intensified calls for measures to reduce the number of school districts in the state.
Maine	A November 2005 draft report included recommendations for administrative consolidation to reduce the current 290 districts to 26. Implemented as part of the governor's budget in 2006.
Nebraska	A 2005 legislative initiative forces all public schools to become part of a K-12 system, reducing the number of school districts by almost half to about 270.
South Carolina	The legislature has proposed consolidation to pay for court-ordered funding of a K-3 program, yet a recent legislative study found that consolidation might lower student performance.
South Dakota	In 2004, the legislature provided special funding to reimburse districts for expenses of consolidation initiatives. Mergers will reduce the number of districts to 171, down from a high of 3,000 in the 1960s.
Texas	The legislature is looking at consolidation as means to address a State Supreme Court ruling that the current funding scheme is unconstitutional. A report with recommendations was due July 2006.
West Virginia	An aggressive school building consolidation policy has been pursued. Funding will be provided only for buildings with 1,000 or more students. More than 100 buildings are currently targeted in West Virginia's 55 countywide school districts.

Source: National Council of State Legislatures and state school board associations, 2007.

Appendix C
Analysis of York County Merger
Impact on Salary Costs

York County Consolidation Estimate
Based on 2005-06 Salary and Placement Schedules

Column	Current Salary	New Salary	Increase	PSERS	FICA	Total Cost Increase	Staff	Average Salary Current	Average Salary New
Inst I	2,735,419	18,189,144	5,453,725	126,254	208,605	5,788,584	455	27,990	39,976
Inst II	4,786,118	42,665,668	17,879,550	413,912	683,893	18,977,354	862	28,754	49,496
M	54,479,407	65,331,248	10,851,841	251,220	415,083	11,518,144	1,126	48,383	58,021
M+15	21,870,470	24,557,174	2,686,704	62,197	102,766	2,851,668	419	52,197	58,609
M+30	15,958,711	27,251,273	11,292,562	261,423	431,940	11,985,925	432	36,941	63,082
M+45	15,490,017	17,984,682	2,494,665	57,751	95,421	2,647,837	265	58,453	67,867
M+60	27,837,536	28,876,180	1,038,644	24,045	39,728	1,102,417	422	65,966	68,427
Total	173,157,678	224,855,369	51,697,691	1,196,802	1,977,437	54,871,929	3,981	43,496	56,482
Average	43,496	56,482	12,986	601	993				

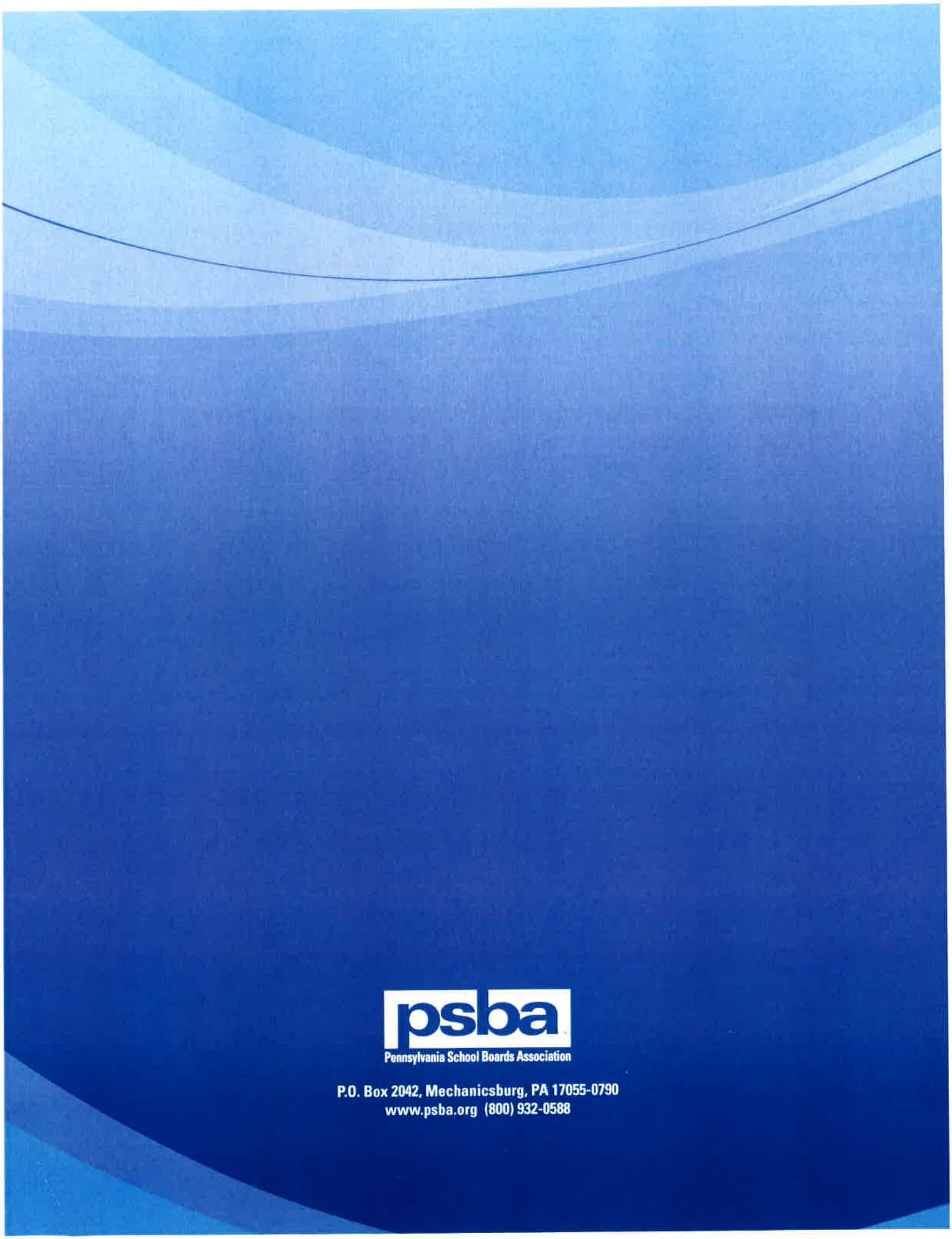
Source: District, collective bargaining agreements for 2005-06 and district business managers.

Notes:

1. Calculations do not include Dover ASD and York Vo-Tech; both were negotiating contacts for 2005-06 at the time of the analysis.
2. Calculations do not include West Shore SD (serves York and Cumberland counties) and Northern York County SD. Both districts are part of IU 15, while the balance of York County is part of IU 12.
3. Calculations of the new salary are based on the highest salary paid in step and column of the salary schedules for those districts included in the analysis. When merging districts, the assumption is that all salaries would be raised to the highest salary paid by column and step.
4. PSERS and FICA are based on 50% of the total cost.

The PSBA Education Research & Policy Center is an affiliate of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. The PSBA Education Research & Policy Center is dedicated to the purpose of in-depth research and analysis of issues affecting public education in Pennsylvania.

Questions about school mergers and consolidation may be directed to: Dr. David Davare, PSBA director of Research Services, (800) 932-0588, ext. 3372, or dave.davare@psba.org.



P.O. Box 2042, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0790
www.psba.org (800) 932-0588

Sidney Clark
Attachment # 3

Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates - Architects
401 East Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
Maryland • Pennsylvania • Virginia • West Virginia

Shankvsille-Stoneybrook School District
Grades K-12

SCALE		DESCRIPTION	FCI %	TIMELINE
5	NEW	New or like-new condition; Reevaluate in 8 - 10 years	91% - 100%	8-10 YRS.
4	GOOD	Minimal wear for age, no issues	61% - 90%	6-8 YRS.
3	FAIR	Average wear for age, approaching end of lifecycle	31% - 60%	4-6 YRS.
2	POOR	Worn from use or age, end of expected lifecycle	16% - 30%	2-4 YRS.
1	CRITICAL	Extremely worn or damaged, replace as soon as possible	0% - 15%	< 2 YRS.

FACILITY CONDITION INDEX (FCI) | Assessed July 2023

Site	5	4	3	2	1	NA	Comments & Recommendations	ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST Low	to	High
1 Perimeter Fencing & Gates				X			4' Chain link at basketball court - vinyl coated	$12,000		$15,000
2 Athletic Fields						X				
3 Mill and Overlay paving			X				Limited areas	$80,000		$120,000
4 On-Site Sidewalks			X				Sidewalk replacement/slab jacking	$40,000		$65,000
5 Play Equipment										
6 Paving				X			Sealcoat and re-stripe	$27,200		$33,500
7 Striping, Markings, Speed Bumps			X					$10,000		$15,000
8 Curbing	X									
9 On-Site Signage			X					$2,500		$3,500
10 Exterior Furniture, Bike Racks, Storage						X				
11 Retaining Walls, Site Walls						X				
12 Outdoor Basketball Court Paving					X			$122,000		$189,000
							Subtotal	$293,700	-	$441,000

Site Accessibility	5	4	3	2	1	NA		Low	to	High
1 Pedestrian Access - ADA & Safety	X									
2 Vehicular Access - Vehicles	X									
3 Vehicular Access - Buses	X									
4 Vehicular Access - Deliveries				X			Loading dock repairs and expansion			
5 Handicap Parking	X									

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Shankvsille-Stoneybrook School District
Grades K-12

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4	GOOD	Minimal wear for age, no issues	61% - 90%	6-8 YRS.
3	FAIR	Average wear for age, approaching end of lifecycle	31% - 60%	4-6 YRS.
2	POOR	Worn from use or age, end of expected lifecycle	16% - 30%	2-4 YRS.
1	CRITICAL	Extremely worn or damaged, replace as soon as possible	0% - 15%	< 2 YRS.

6 Accessible Entry	X									
7 Exterior Stairs and Railings	X									
8 Exterior Ramps	X									
								Subtotal	$0 -	$0

Exterior Building Envelope	5	4	3	2	1	NA		Low	to	High
1 Structure	X									
2 Exterior Masonry Repointing		X						$30,000		$45,000
3 Roof		X					Evalutate membrane seams every year			
4 Soffits										
5 Walls		X								
6 Doors & Hardware	X									
7 Windows	X									
8 Exterior E.I.F.S.				X				$210,000		$350,000
9 Exterior EIFS Trim replacement					X			$40,800		$56,400
							Subtotal	$280,800	-	$451,400

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Shankvsille-Stoneybrook School District
Grades K-12

SCALE		DESCRIPTION	FCI %	TIMELINE
5	NEW	New or like-new condition; Reevaluate in 8 - 10 years	91% - 100%	8-10 YRS.
4	GOOD	Minimal wear for age, no issues	61% - 90%	6-8 YRS.
3	FAIR	Average wear for age, approaching end of lifecycle	31% - 60%	4-6 YRS.
2	POOR	Worn from use or age, end of expected lifecycle	16% - 30%	2-4 YRS.
1	CRITICAL	Extremely worn or damaged, replace as soon as possible	0% - 15%	< 2 YRS.

Interior Elements	5	4	3	2	1	NA		Low	to	High
1 Finishes - Walls	X									
2 Finishes - Flooring		X								
3 Finishes - Ceilings	X									
4 Casework and Millwork	X									
5 Signage/ Wayfinding			X							
6 Moveable/Operable Partitions										
7 Doors - Frame and Door			X							
8 Food Service Equipment		X								
9 Gym divider Curtain	X						New divider curtain with controls	$37,600		$56,400
10 Gymnasium Equipment	X						New basketball goals	$72,000		$108,000
11 Bleachers				X				$122,000		$183,000
12 Gymnasium wall pads		X					New wall pads	$7,000		$9,000
13 Toilet Rooms			X				5 group toilet rooms (not incl. locker rooms)	$680,000		$830,000
							Subtotal	$918,600	-	$1,186,400

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1	CRITICAL	Extremely worn or damaged, replace as soon as possible	0% - 15%	< 2 YRS.

Interior Accessibility	5	4	3	2	1	NA		Low	to	High
1 Stairs, Ramps and Railings			X				Code Compliance during a renovation project			
2 Elevators, Chairlifts	X									
3 Doors - Openings and Hardware	X									
4 Toilet Rooms		X								
5 Signage			X					$8,000		$12,000
							Subtotal	$1,845,200	-	$2,384,800

Safety & Security	5	4	3	2	1	NA		Low	to	High
1 Appropriate Exterior Lighting	X									
2 Natural Surveillance	X									
3 Camera System - Interior and Exterior	X									
4 Secure Entry Vestibule	X									
5 Card Access at Exterior Exits	X									
6 PA System - Heard Throughout Building	X									
7 Building Lockdown - Layered			X							
8 Emergency Services Contact Method		X								
9 Classroom Door - Lockdown			X							
10 Number all Exterior Exit Doors		X								
							Subtotal	$0	-	$0

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1	CRITICAL	Extremely worn or damaged, replace as soon as possible	0% - 15%	< 2 YRS.

Systems - Plumbing & Fire Protection	5	4	3	2	1	NA		Low	to	High
1 Fire Pump Replacement				X			Recommended	$43,100		$49,500
2 Expand Fire Protection System			X				Suggested to be included as part of major project	$374,500		$430,600
3 Water Pipe Sampling				X			Recommended to determine the about of needed replacement	$3,000		$3,500
4 Sanitary Piping Scoping				X			Recommended to determine the about of needed replacement	$5,000		$5,800
5 Storm Piping Scoping				X			Recommended to determine the about of needed replacement	$2,500		$2,900
6 Water Piping Replacement			X				Part of major renovation and as required, estimate assumes majority of piping would be replaced	$421,200		$484,400
7 Sanitary Piping Replacement			X				Part of major renovation and as required, estimate assumes majority of piping would be replaced	$608,500		$699,800
8 Storm Piping Replacement			X				Part of major renovation and as required,estimate assumes majority of piping would be replaced	$234,000		$269,100
9 Domestic Water Heater Replacement				X			Recommended	$64,700		$74,400
10 Plumbing Fixture Replacement			X				Suggested to be included as part of major project	$327,700		$376,800
11 Domestic Water Key Valve Replacement				X			Recommended	$74,900		$86,100
12 Domestic Water Pump System Replacement				X			Recommended	$82,000		$94,300
13 Exterior Sanitary Replacement				X			The quantity of replacement is unknown	$75,000		$86,300
							Subtotal	$2,316,100	-	$2,663,500

Systems - Electrical	5	4	3	2	1	NA		Low	to	High
1 Replace Existing Switchboards and Panels			X				This would only be due to age replacement and not required upgrades/renovations	$750,000		$860,000
2 Replace Existing Transformers			X				This would only be due to age replacement and not required upgrades/renovations	$280,000		$325,000
3 Upgrade Electrical Service for Full Building HVAC					X		Asumes existing electrical service is undersized to support full building AC	$470,000		$540,000
4 Upgrade Emergency Distribution System			X				Low costs assumes existing existing generator is adequate and is being reused. High costs assumes replacement of generator with a larger capacity generator	$280,000		$323,000
5 Install TVSS protection for existing emergency panels		X					This is only the emergency panels	$18,000		$21,000
6 Relocate generator emergency annunciator to main office			X					$5,000		$6,000
7 Interior Lighting and Controls			X					$750,000		$860,000
8 Exterior Lighting and Controls			X					$185,000		$215,000
8 Theatrical Lighting and Controls				X				$600,000		$690,000
9 Cafetorium Sound System				X				$200,000		$230,000
10 Complete upgrade to CAT 6 wiring			X					$560,000		$645,000
11 Program/Clock/Sound				X				$275,000		$316,500
12 Replace Elevator Lobby Emergency Communication System					X			$7,500		$8,750
13 Fire Alarm & Security			X					$190,000		$215,000
							Subtotal	$4,570,500	-	$5,255,250

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1	CRITICAL	Extremely worn or damaged, replace as soon as possible	0% - 15%	< 2 YRS.

Systems - HVAC	5	4	3	2	1	NA		Low	to	High
1 HVAC Equipment Replacement & Add A/C				X			Recommended	$2,150,000		$2,470,000
2 Exhaust Systems Replacement				X			Recommended	$187,200		$215,300
3 New ATC				X			Recommended	$702,100		$807,400
4 Boiler Replacement			X				Suggested to be included as part of major project	$199,400		$229,300
5 HW Pump Replacement and VFDs			X				Suggested to be included as part of major project	$70,900		$81,500
6 Oil Tank Replacement		X					No immediate need to replace	$65,000		$74,800
7 Other Boiler Plant Improvements				X			Recommended	$45,000		$51,800
8 Key Valve Replacement			X				Suggested to be included as part of major project	$74,900		$86,100
9 HW distribution piping replacement			X				Part of major renovation and as required, assumes majority of piping would be replaced	$440,000		$506,000
							Subtotal	$3,934,500	-	$4,522,200

Note: For comprehensive projects, incorporate a 20% soft cost for each project and a 4% escalation factor for each year beyond 2023 due to projected inflation. The above costs are for construction only and do not include these factors or fees associated with a project. These upgrades are from a facility basis only and do not include educational considerations. Refer to the Educational Suitability Assessment (ESA).

	Low Cost	-	High Cost
< 2 YRS.	$640,300	-	$794,150
2-4 YRS.	$4,880,700	-	$5,765,300
4-6 YRS.	$6,571,600	-	$7,658,100
6-8 YRS.	$120,000	-	$149,800
8-10 YRS.	$109,600	-	$164,400
Add/Expand Current Systems:	*$0*	-	*$0*
Total Cost to Upgrade to Current Standards:	$12,322,200	-	$14,531,750

FCI Rating %	

Sidney Clark
Attachment #4

SHANKSVILLE-STONYCREEK HIGH SCHOOL

2023/2024 CURRICULUM GUIDE GRADES 9-12

Revised 02/2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Shanksville-Stonycreek School District is an equal opportunity education district and will not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, nationality, religion, marital status, age, or handicap in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504.

Inquiries regarding compliance to the law or grievance procedures may be directed to high school principal, Shanksville-Stonycreek School, Shanksville, PA 15560-Phone 814-267-4649. For information regarding services, activities and facilities that are accessible to and useable by handicapped individuals contact the high school principal or high school guidance counselor at 814-267-4649.

Foreword

This Curriculum Guide has been designed to inform students and parents of the courses being offered at the Shanksville-Stonycreek High School. This Curriculum Guide contains the names of all courses offered (required and elective) in grades nine through twelve, along with a brief description of the course, the credit offered for the course, and any prerequisites that are required.

Students are encouraged to work closely with the guidance counselor to determine an appropriate course of study.

General Information

Graduation Requirements

- All students will successfully complete the student learning standards in the nine academic areas as specified by Chapter 4.
- Options for achieving student learning standards shall include but not be limited to:

A. Course Completion

Satisfactory completion of the planned courses as determined by the principal in consultation with the teacher shall contribute to the achievement of student learning standards. The following planned courses and credits shall be completed:

Course	Credits
English	**5**
Math	**4**
Science	**4 classes**
Social Studies	**4**
Health and Phys. Ed.	**1**
Drivers' Theory	**.25**
Family & Consumer Science	**.25**
Computer Science	**2**
Electives	**5.5**
Culminating Project	**1**

Total credits need to graduate: 27

Refer to Yearly Requirements (pages 7-8) for further explanation

Culminating Project

Each student will have a project portfolio that will include information developed on a sequential basis relative to the project.

All students should choose a topic that reflects a personal or career interest.

Project Timeline:

Grade 11: Students will meet with their advisors on a regular basis to develop all three parts of the project - product, research paper, and oral presentation.

Grade 12: Students will present their senior projects on the first Act 80 day of the school year. If the student does not pass, the first semester of the senior year will be used to revise any part of the project that did not receive a satisfactory grade.

Projects may be submitted before the deadline. Resubmission of any unsatisfactory components should be completed by October 31 of the senior year. All students must have a completed and approved project before a diploma can be granted.

Class Rank

Class rank is determined by a grade point average (GPA). The GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points accumulated by the total number of credits attempted.

The following grade point system will be in effect for all students in grades 9-12:

Grade Points

A=4 B=3 C=2 D=1 F=0

Example:

Grade	Credit Worth		GP
A	1.0	x 4 =	4.0
B	1.0	x 3 =	3.0
B	.5	x 3 =	1.5
F	1.0	x 0 =	0.0
Total	**3.5**		**8.5**
GP divided by credit	**8.5/3.5**	**=**	**2.429**

Graduation Speakers Policy

Ranking for valedictorian and salutatorian will not be determined until final grades are submitted by the faculty at the end of the school year. Students in the running for these honors will be given advanced notice of this fact. These students are advised to be prepared to speak at Commencement. Notice will be given the day after the last day of senior finals about final standings. The valedictorian, salutatorian, and highest ranking Vocational-Technical student (if GPA is at least 3.0) will speak at graduation.

Honor Roll Policy

Students, who after any of the four nine week grading periods have all A's and B's, will be listed on the honor roll. This includes all classes. Students cannot have all B's (S's in the elementary) and be listed on the honor roll. Also, secondary students who have been on the honor roll for the first three nine weeks will be recognized at the Honors' Banquet.

Adding, Dropping, or Repeating a Subject

- Students must earn twenty-seven (27) credits in grades 9-12 in order to meet graduation requirements. The curriculum at SSHS is designed to see that students accomplish this task.
- No student may schedule more that five study halls periods per week unless scheduling conflicts, as determined by the administration, make this necessary.
- No course may be substituted for another without the approval of the school principal.

At times it may become necessary to add or drop a course after school starts because of unforeseen events. Therefore, a student should contact the guidance counselor and obtain a parental consent slip for adding or dropping a subject. All add or drop subjects must be signed by the parent or guardian.

Any student dropping a subject after the first two weeks will automatically receive a "W-F" (withdraw-failing) for the entire course and it will be noted on the permanent record card as such. **In addition, the student will received no Grade Points for the "W-F" course but the credit value of the course will be included in the computation of the GPA.** High school students may repeat a course and replace a grade given for that course.

Promotion Policy

Students will continue to advance grade levels throughout high school (grades 9-12). If a student fails a class required for graduation, he/she may reschedule that course the following school year or make up the credit during summer school or tutoring. Senior status, however, will only be granted to students who will complete the required courses for graduation during that particular school year.

College Visitations

Students are permitted to have three (3) excused absences for college visits. The visits must be prior approved by the guidance counselor and the student is required to turn in a parental permission form. Students must bring in an admission officer's signature on college letterhead for the day to be excused.

Summer School/Course Make-Up

Students who have failed courses during the regular school year may:

- The parents must find an acceptable (to the school administration), properly certified (in the field being taught) tutor.
- The financial arrangements are strictly between the parents and the tutor. The district has no part of this.
- The administration will determine the number of hours that are to be used in the tutoring process based on the final failing average in the course:

Percent		
55-59	=	30 hours
50-54	=	32 hours
45-49	=	34 hours
40-44	=	35 hours
Below 40	=	40 hours

- No more than two hours per day are to be used in tutoring.
- The district assumes no obligation, financially or otherwise, to parents where children fail to make a "C" at the end of the process.
- Failure to follow the process to the letter makes the process NULL and VOID and no credit will be given to the student. Any financial loss is the parents' obligation.

Also, Shanksville students may take summer courses for credit at area schools or through The Learning Lamp in Johnstown or Somerset.

Scheduling

The master schedule is completed annually during the Spring semester. The guidance counselor meets with every class in grades 5-11 to distribute and explain the schedules for the next school year. Students are required to take the schedules home and review them with their parents. At this point parents may call to discuss any questions they might have with the guidance counselor, or they may schedule an appointment.

Move Up Day

During the last week of the school year, students in grades 5-11 participate in Move Up Day. This provides an opportunity for students to practice next year's schedule. Classes are shortened to approximately 10 minutes in length. Teachers give a brief overview of course content and expectations.

YEARLY REQUIREMENTS

English: 5 credits beginning in grade 9

Grade 9: Speech & Research Writing (Academic or General)
English 9 (Academic or General)

Grade 10: English 10 (Academic or General)

Grade 11: English 11 (Academic or General)

Grade 12: English 12 (Academic or General)

Math: 4 credits beginning in grade 9

Grade 9: Algebra II or Algebra I

Grade 10: Algebra II, Geometry (Academic) or Technical Algebra II/III

Grade 11: Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry, Geometry, or Applied Geometry

Grade 12: Calculus, College Algebra, Business Math or Consumer Math

Social Studies: 4 credits beginning in grade 9

Grade 9: Civics

Grade 10: World Cultures

Grade 11: American History

Grade 12: Problems of Democracy (POD)

Science: 4 full year classes beginning in grade 9

Grade 9: Science 9 (Academic or General)

Grade 10: Biology/Lab (Academic or General)

Grade 11: Chemistry/Lab (Academic or General)

Grade 12: Physics/Lab (Academic or General)

Computer Science: 2 credits total between grades 9-12

Must include 2 of the following:
Internet Research (.5 credit) (occurs in grade 10)
Web Page Design (.5 credit) (occurs in grade 10)
Office Practice (.6 credit) (occurs in grade 10, 11, or 12)
Document Processing (.5 credit) (occurs in grade 9)
Microsoft Certification (.5 credit) (occurs in grade 11 or 12)
Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) (.5 or 1.0 credits) (occurs in grade 11 or 12)
Yearbook (.5 or 1.0 credits) (occurs in grade 11 or 12)
Multimedia Journalism (.5 or 1.0 credits) (occurs in grade 11 or 12)
Student Technician Program (.5 or 1.0) (occurs in grade 11 or 12)
Any online course (college)
.5 credit will be given each year a student attends SCTC

Phys. Ed: .6 credit total between grades 9-12 (usually occurs in grade 9)

Health: .4 credit total between grades 9-12 (usually occurs in grade 9)

Driver's Ed: .25 credit between grades 9-12 (usually occurs in grade 10)

Family/Consumer Science: .25 credit between grades 9-12 (usually occurs in grade 9)

Senior Project: 1 credit (occurs upon completion of project in grade 12)

Electives: 5.5 electives between grades 9-12 (students attending the Technology Center are given 3 elective credits each year they attend)

Total Required credits: 27

SOMERSET COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CENTER COURSES

Vocational and technical education is available to students in grades ten, eleven, and twelve through courses offered at the Somerset County Technology Center. Students who are interested in attending the Tech Center should apply during the school year prior to the year they wish to enter (usually grade 9). The number of students permitted to enter each training area is limited and certain courses have prerequisites for entrance.

The following courses are offered at the Somerset County Technology Center:

Auto Body Technology/Collision Repair
Auto Technology
Building Trades Maintenance
Business Marketing Technology
Carpentry
Cosmetology
Computer Networking
Culinary Arts
Drafting and Design Technology
Early Childhood Education
Electrical Occupations
Forestry
Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning
Machine Technology
Masonry
Medical
Welding Technology

** All Vocational students will receive 3 elective credits each year they attend the Technology Center. They will also receive .5 computer credits each year towards their graduation requirements.

EARLY COLLEGE COURSES

Allegany College of Maryland offers 4 college level courses to our students during the school day. Students may take 2 courses during their Junior year and 2 courses during their Senior year for a total of 2 elective high school credits and 12 college credits. Courses may be transferred to other colleges and universities upon completion.

Classes include: Freshman Composition I, Western Civilization, General Psychology, and Introduction to Sociology

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Four units of English in the high school are required of all students for graduation. Basic offerings include Academic English and General English at each grade level. In addition, a course in Speech/Research Writing is required. The prerequisite would be the level from the preceding year unless otherwise noted.

English 9 Academic **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course addresses the Pennsylvania standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students are guided through collections of fiction, non fiction, drama, and poetry as they analyze plot, setting, characters, point of view, theme, irony, symbolism, allegory and drama. The course also continues vocabulary development through vocabulary lessons and the study of prefixes, suffixes, word origins, analogies, use of context clues, synonyms and figurative language. Students will focus on strengthening writing skills and improving grammatical skills as they compose multi-paragraph compositions. *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this course should have successfully completed eighth grade English with a minimum grade of 80 percent.*

English 10 Academic **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course continues to address the Pennsylvania standards in reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Students are guided through collections of fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry as they analyze plot, setting, characterization, point of view, theme, irony ambiguity, symbolism, allegory, characteristics of poetry, elements of style, and characteristics of drama. The course also continues vocabulary development through vocabulary lessons and the study of affixes, analogies, etymologies, context clues, root words, synonyms and anonyms, multiple meaning words, and connotation and denotation. Students will focus on strengthening writing skills as they compose multi-paragraph compositions and improving grammatical skills. *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this course should have successfully completed English 9 Academic with a minimum grade of 80 percent.*

English 11 Academic **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course continues to address the Pennsylvania standards in reading, writing, and speaking and listening as students build a knowledge and understanding of literature and language skills. Students travel through chronological collections that cover each literary period's historical, political, and social events through the exploration of informational texts, works of fiction, public documents, and poems. The journey begins with the colonists, continues through American Romanticism and Realism, and ends with the works of Contemporary authors and poets. The course also continues vocabulary development through vocabulary lessons and the study of affixes, analogies, etymologies, context clues, root words, synonyms and anonyms, multiple meaning words, and connotation and denotation. Students will focus on strengthening writing, speaking, and grammatical skills. *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this course should have successfully completed English 10 Academic with a minimum grade of 80 percent.*

English 12 Academic **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course continues to address the Pennsylvania standard in reading writing, and speaking and listening while preparing students to enter college and the work force. Students are guided through collections of fiction and nonfiction as they explore British literature and the works of playwright William Shakespeare. In addition student will develop English skills needed to make a smooth transition from the classroom into the college and adult society. The course also continues vocabulary development through vocabulary lessons and the study of affixes, analogies, etymologies, context clues, roots words, and synonyms and

anonyms. Student will continue to improve grammatical skills and strengthen writing skills as they compose multi-paragraph compositions. *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this course should have successfully completed English 11 Academic with a minimum grade of 80 percent.*

English 9 General **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course addresses the Pennsylvania standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students are guided through collections of fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry as they analyze plot, setting, characters, point of view, theme, irony symbolism, allegory and drama. The course also continues vocabulary development through vocabulary lessons and the study of prefixes, suffixes, word origins, analogies, use of context clues, synonyms and figurative language. Students will focus on strengthening writing skills and improving grammatical skills as they compose multi-paragraph compositions. *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this course should have successfully completed Grade 8 English.*

English 10 General **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course continues to address the Pennsylvania standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students are guided through collections of fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry as they analyze plot, setting characterization, point of view, theme, irony ambiguity, symbolism, allegory, characteristics of poetry, elements of style, and characteristics of drama. The course also continues vocabulary development through vocabulary lessons and the study of affixes, analogies, etymologies, context clues, root words, synonyms and antonyms, multiple meaning words, and connotation and denotation. Students will focus on strengthening writing skills as they compose multi-paragraph compositions and improving grammatical skills. *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this course should have successfully completed English 9 General.*

English 11 General **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course continues to address the Pennsylvania standards in reading, writing, and speaking and listening as students build a knowledge and understanding of literature and language skills. Students travel through chronological collections that cover each literary period's historical, political, and social events through the exploration of informational texts, works of fiction, public documents, and poems. The journey begins with the colonists, continues through American Romanticism and Realism, and ends with the works of Contemporary authors and poets. The course also continues vocabulary development through vocabulary lessons and the study of affixes, analogies, etymologies, context clues, root words, synonyms and anonyms, multiple meaning words, and connotation and denotation. Students will focus on strengthening writing, speaking, and grammatical skills. *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this course should have successfully completed English 10 General.*

English 12 General **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course continues to address the Pennsylvania standard in reading, writing, and speaking and listening while preparing students to enter college and the work force. Students are guided through collections of fiction and nonfiction as they explore British literature and the word of playwright William Shakespeare. In addition students will develop English skills needed to make a smooth transition from the classroom into the workforce and adult society. Students will continue to improve grammatical skills, increase vocabulary, and strengthen writing skills as they compose multi-paragraph compositions. *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this course should have successfully completed English 11.*

Speech and Research Writing **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course addresses the Pennsylvania standards in reading, writing, and speaking and listening while introducing students to the research writing process and strengthening public speaking skills. Students will learn the twelve steps in writing a successful research paper as they conduct both traditional and online research. Students will work through the process beginning with choosing a topic and progressing

through note taking, developing a thesis, creating an outline, completing a works cited page, and typing the final copy. At mid-year the focus will change to public speaking. Students will learn the step-by-step process to delivering various types of speeches including an impromptu, persuasive, informative, and demonstrative. *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in the course must have successfully completed eighth grade English.*

Yearbook **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course is designed to be a hands-on working sessions to create the yearbook under the supervision of the advisor/teacher. Students will define their roles as a staff member, learn skills to conceptualize the yearbook, learn ethical and legal obligations in producing the yearbook, and plan and place content in the yearbook. Students are responsible for acquiring the photographs, copy graphic elements necessary for the pages assigned and meeting deadlines throughout the year. It is also a goal of the yearbook class to teach students how to design a yearbook spread, choose reader-friendly topography, use graphics, and prepare the yearbook for plant production. As an added component of the yearbook process, students will learn the skills necessary for a successful book sales campaign. *Prerequisites: Prospective students will be required to complete an application highlighting their reasons for enrolling in the class, commitment to the staff and process, strengths and weakness in regards to skills needed in creating a yearbook, and ability to write captions. This application will be used by the yearbook advisor to determine enrollment into the course.*

Multi-Media Journalism **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course is designed to give participants exposure to the differing realms of journalism in the 21st century. Participants will develop journalistic writing and interview skills, learn layout, design and production techniques, use various types of software and equipment, and practice the ethical and legal responsibility of journalists. The aptitudes will then be applied in creating news resources including The Viklet, WVIK Viking News, and VikeLine blog, and podcasts. All participants will be expected to contribute in all phases of the design process of each product including: writing, editing, designing, producing, and performing. This course is writing intensive and requires a strong degree of self-motivation, responsibility, and collaboration. *Prerequisites: Students enrolling in this course must have achieved a minimum grade of 70 percent in the previous year's English class. Prospective students will also be required to submit a writing sample to the teacher, which will be used by the English department to determine enrollment into the course.*

Exploring the Classics I **.5 credit** **5 x week** **Semester**

Students enrolled in this course will have the opportunity to read and discuss classic works of literature. Much of the discussion will take place via an on-line discussion board. Students will read classic novels, write and share journal entries, participate in group discussions, and write a paper or take a test at the conclusion of each novel. It is the goal of this course to explore human nature, motivation, and behavior by examining the characters in the works that are read. Throughout the year, students will read novels such as *Old Man and the Sea, Flowers for Algernon, The Great Gatsby, Than Frome,* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. This course is available to students in grade 10-12. . *Prerequisites: Students enrolled in this course must have a minimum grade of 70 percent in last year's English class. Students must also have an interest in reading be willing to participate in group discussions and share their thoughts and opinions.*

Creative Writing **.5 credit** **5 x week** **Semester**

This class is designed to give students an additional opportunity to explore various types of writing and to refine their writing skills. Students are given structured writing assignments such as poems, essays, and short stories. Students work independently on projects with the help of the instructor as a mentor. The focus of the class is individuality. Students are encouraged to develop their own style and expand their own ideas. *Prerequisites: Successful completion of student's previous year's English class with a grade of 70 percent or greater.*

Debate .5 credit 5 x week Semester

Students in this course will learn the basics of debate including types of debate and then participate in debates using the skills learned in class. *Prerequisites: Student enrolled in this course should have successfully completed previous English class with a minimum grade of 80 %.*

Introduction to Theatre .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course is designed to give students the opportunity to explore theater arts through the study of acting, character development, improvisation, movement, directing, costume design, set design and blocking. Students will be required to attend or participate in at least one dramatic performance during the school year and be willing to participate in classroom activities. *Prerequisites: Students must have permission from the teacher to enroll in the class.*

SAT Preparation 1 credit 5 x week Full Year

The objective of this course is to better prepare students for the verbal selection of the SAT and provide skills needed to improve test scores. Students will participate in practice drills, examine the format and types of questions on the SAT, learn test taking strategies, and complete practice tests. *Prerequisites: This course is available to students in grades 11-12.*

FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

The Spanish program consists of four years of language study. While foreign language is not required for graduation students should complete Spanish prior to graduating.

Spanish I 1 credit 5 x week Full Year

Students enrolled in Spanish I progress through eight thematic chapters, designed to expose participants to oral communication, basic grammatical concepts, and cultural awareness. Students develop motivation and confidence in their ability to communicate through meaningful and personalized situations that are vocabulary driven and grammar based. This course is offered at the eighth grade level.

Spanish II 1 credit 5 x week Full Year

Students continue their study of the Spanish language and culture in Spanish II. As the vocabulary and grammar bases expand, students are expected to conduct more of their conversations in the target language. Additional emphasis is placed on students' communicative abilities through the writing of short narratives and compositions as well as the reading and discussion of intermediate-level literary selections. *Prerequisite: Students enrolled in this course must have a minimum of 70% in Spanish I.*

Spanish III 1 credit 5 x week Full Year

In this upper level study of the Spanish language and culture, students are expected to conduct 75-85% of their classroom conversation in the target language. While grammar and vocabulary lessons remain an integral part of the curriculum, students will intensify their study of the culture with units on art, famous people, Pre-Colombian Indian tribes, etc. *Prerequisite: Students enrolled in this course must have a minimum of 70% in Spanish II.*

Spanish IV 1 credit 5 x week Full Year

Students enrolled in Spanish IV are expected to conduct 90-100% of their classroom conversation in the target language. Expansion of complex grammatical structures and advanced vocabulary continues along with in-depth study of the culture. Student-prepared skits, compositions and journal entries, and the reading of a novel are activities that enhance all forms of communication in the target language. *Prerequisites: Students in Spanish IV are required to have a minimum of 70% in Spanish III.*

MATH DEPARTMENT

Four math courses are required in the high school for graduation. Students should select courses relative to their ability and course difficulty. The math department utilizes a weighted grading scale based on the following criteria: 50% Tests, 25% Quizzes, and 25% Homework/Notebook/Participation.

Algebra I — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This beginning course in algebra is taught in either eighth or ninth grade depending on the student's previous coursework. It moves at a fast pace. After reviewing equations and variables as well as number operations and properties of numbers, the students will develop problem solving skills in the following topics: solving, graphing and writing linear equations, solving and graphing linear inequalities, solving systems of equations and inequalities, exponents and exponential functions, polynomials and factoring, and quadratic equations. *Prerequisite: 80% in Pre-Algebra or teacher recommendation or successful completion of 8th grade math.*

Algebra II — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This academic course is a continuation of Algebra I. Topics includes: equations/inequalities, linear equations and functions, systems of equations and inequalities, matrices, quadratic functions, polynomials, powers/roots/radicals, exponential and logarithmic functions, rational equations and functions, sequences/series, probability, and statistics. Mastering these topics takes a serious, concentrated effort; therefore, students must be prepared to spend additional time studying outside of class. *Prerequisites – Algebra I*

Technical Algebra II/III — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This course is a continuation of the topics covered in Algebra I. Topics include models of variation and growth, linear systems, quadratic functions and graphs, counting strategies and probability, and polynomial and rational functions. *Prerequisites: Algebra I*

Applied Geometry — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This course covers the applied aspects of Geometry and some basics of writing proofs. Topics presented include reasoning and proof, parallel lines and triangles, congruent triangles, quadrilaterals, similar triangles, coordinate geometry, area, circles, surface area, volume, and transformational geometry. This course offers a hands-on approach to Geometry. *Prerequisites: SCTC Student and Algebra I or Teacher Approval.*

Geometry — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This academic course is designed to teach students the basics of Euclidean geometry. Topics include two-column, paragraph, and indirect proofs, congruent and similar triangles, lines and planes in space, polygons, the Pythagorean Theorem, area, surface area and volume, and circles. Algebraic skills are reviewed and strengthened through application of problem solving geometry. Mastering these topics takes a concentrated effort; therefore, students should be prepared to spend additional time outside of class studying. *Prerequisites: Algebra I or Teacher Approval*

Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This academic course is designed to prepare students for calculus and college math courses. Students can take this course for college credit. Topics include linear relations and functions, systems of linear equations and inequalities, nature of graphs, polynomial and rational functions, trigonometry, conics, exponential and logarithmic functions, sequences and series, combinatorics and probability, statistic and data analysis, and an introduction to Calculus. *Prerequisite: Algebra II.*

Calculus — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This academic course is the highest-level mathematics course offered and can be taken for college credit. In order to master the concepts presented, students will need to spend additional time outside of the class studying. Topics from college-level Calculus I and II are covered. Topics covered include limits, differentiation, applications of differentiation, integration, logarithmic/exponential functions, application of integration, integration techniques, L'Hopital's Rule, infinite series, conics, parametric equations, polar coordinates and vectors. *Prerequisites: 80% in Pre-calculus/Trigonometry or Teacher Approval.*

College Algebra — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This academic course is designed to build upon algebra classes already taken in high school while giving students a head start for an algebra class in college. Topics include equations and inequalities, graphs, polynomial functions, rational functions, exponential functions, logarithmic functions, systems of equations and inequalities, matrices, sequences, series and probability. *Prerequisites: 11th or 12th grade, Algebra II or Technical Algebra II/III*

Consumer Math — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This course is designed to cover the many applications of math to the consumer. Topics covered include covering your expenses, budgets, salary, take-home pay, banks, checking accounts, credit cards, loans, housing, buying food and other personal items, owning and maintaining vehicles, recreation and travel, insurance and money management strategies. *Prerequisite: 12th grade.*

Statistics — **.6 credit** — **3 x week** — **Full Year**

This course is designed to provide students with a good foundation in statistics. Students can take this course for college credit. Topics include random samples, organizing data, averages and variation, elementary probability theory, binomial, geometric, Poisson probability distributions, normal distributions, introduction to sampling distributions, estimation, hypothesis testing, correlation, and regression, chi-square and F distributions, and nonparametric statistics. Mastering these topics takes a serious, concentrated effort, so students should be prepared to spend time studying outside of class. *Prerequisites: Grades 11 or 12, Algebra II, or Teacher Approval*

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Four science classes are required in the high school for graduation. It is important the students take the basic science courses – science, biology, chemistry, and physics before taking the advanced course electives. The elective courses should supplement the student's education and not to replace other courses.

Science 9 Academic/General — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This course in Earth and the Environmental Science includes topics on the atmosphere, weather, earth's waters, minerals, rocks, soil, processes, earthquakes, volcanoes, and movements in the earth's crust, plate tectonics, the sun, moon, and earth as an orbiting system, star groups, and the galaxies. Lab activities and investigations are done with each unit.

General Biology — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This course gives the student a broad background in many of the life sciences such as botany, zoology, genetics and microbiology. The class consists of lecture, discussion, and laboratory exercises. The coursework includes various dissections. Each student will be required to complete and independent research project. The course is primarily for the nonacademic students planning to enter the job market upon graduation.

Academic Biology and Lab — **2 credit** — **10 x week** — **Full Year**

The course is for students that have a strong interest in, or desire to pursue a career in, the sciences. The class consists of lecture, discussion, and laboratory exercises. The course explores the functions and processes of ions, molecules and sub cellular components. The roles of cells, tissues, organs, and organ systems within various species are also investigated. DNA cloning, hybridization, and sequencing techniques are explored. Mendel's laws of heredity are examined in terms of genetic variation and mathematical probability. The evidence for gradualism and punctuated equilibrium patterns of evolution will be analyzed. The coursework examines relationships and anatomy of various animal and plant groups. A variety of dissections will also be completed during the lab portion of this class. This course is a prerequisite to Anatomy & Physiology. *Prerequisites: 80% in 9th Grade Science*

Applied Chemistry — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This course is a technical class that covers many of the concepts of fundamental chemistry. The concepts include observations and scientific method, atomic theory, matter and energy, organization of elements, bonding, and gas laws. The main goal is to prepare students for a world very much affected by chemistry. This course will consist of theory, problem solving, and hands on lab activities. There will be research related projects and presentations. *Prerequisites: None*

Chemistry w/Lab — **2 credits** — **10 x week** — **Full Year**

This is an academic course that covers all the concepts of fundamental chemistry. These concepts include observation, atomic theory, chemical reactions, gas laws, phases of matter, electron configuration, the mole, organization of elements and more. The course consists of theory, abstract concepts, and problem solving. There will be hands on activities and research related projects and presentations. This is a college-prep course meant to prepare the student for the first year of college chemistry. Good skills in Algebra are recommended. *Prerequisites: 80% in Academic Biology*

Applied Physics — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This technical or vocational science course provides instruction in the fundamental principles of technology. It uses a unifying approach to study the basic energy system – mechanical, fluid, electrical, and thermal. The course shows how the principles of force, work, rate, and resistance operate in various systems. *Prerequisites: Algebra*

Physics w/Lab — **2 credits** — **10 x week** — **Full Year**

This college preparatory course includes topics in measurement, data analysis, motion, vectors, trigonometric functions, forces, work, energy, momentum, rotation, gravitation, dynamics, fluids, heat, waves, light, electric, magnetism, and nuclear reactions. Problem solving, lab investigations, lab reports, computer simulations, online investigations, multimedia and the scientific calculator are an integral part of the course. *Prerequisites: Algebra II or higher, 80% in Chemistry or other advanced science.*

Advanced Chemistry Elective — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

This course covers all the introductory concepts of a first year college chemistry class. Students can take this course for college credit. The first part of this course is a review of 11th grade chemistry. The second part will cover new advanced material. Other topics include acids and bases, thermo chemistry, chemical equilibrium, organic chemistry, electrochemistry, and nuclear chemistry. The final part of this course will be the lab portion. This is a challenging and fast paced course. This course will prepare you for the second level college chemistry class. *Prerequisites: 80% or higher in Academic Chemistry.*

Anatomy and Physiology .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course covers the structure and function of the human body. The course includes its organization, the integumentary, skeletal, muscular, nervous, endocrine, digestive, respiratory, cardiovascular, lymphatic, excretory, and reproductive systems along with human development. The course includes dissections of the heart, eye, and fetal pig. Students can take this course for college credit. *Prerequisites: Grade 11 or 12 and 80 % in Academic Biology. Corequisite Academic Chemistry*

Microbiology .5 credit 5 x week Semester

Microorganisms, especially their form, structure, reproduction, physiology, metabolism, and identification will be studied with emphasis on their distribution in nature, their beneficial and detrimental effects on humans, and the physical and chemical changes they make in the environment. Aseptic culturing techniques of live microbes are included. *Prerequisites: 80% in Academic Biology and Grade 11 or 12*

Ecology .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course will explore the meaning of sustainability, examine the connections between lifestyles and their pressure on the planet, and consider steps that can be taken to move toward a more sustainable future. The course will increase knowledge and awareness of environmental issues and enhance understanding of ecology. Topics to be included are climate change, energy, water, air pollution, waste management, oceans and fisheries, deforestation, and wildlife management. *Prerequisites: 80% in Academic Biology and Grade 11 or 12*

SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT

Students are required to schedule a core history course every year in high school. Four credits are required for graduation.

Civics 1 credit 5 x week Full Year

This course will provide an introductory basis for understanding the different levels of government (Federal, State, and Local). There will be an emphasis placed on the Constitution (Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches), Foundations of Government, The Political System, Paying for Government, and the Rights Responsibilities of being an American citizen. This course is normally scheduled during student's freshman year.

World Cultures 1 credit 5 x week Full Year

This course will cover World History beginning with the Renaissance and ending in modern times. Students will survey World History's most important people, events, innovations, and accomplishments. Students will be required to take notes, read, write reports, take tests, and do projects in this class. This is a core Social Studies class and is taught during the student's 10th grade year.

American History 1 credit 5 x week Full Year

This course in American History deals with the growth of the United States from colonial to industrial to world power, specifically dealing with the Post Civil War Era. Emphasis will be placed on the history of 20th and early 21st centuries. (WWI, Great Depression, WWII, Korean War, Civil Rights, 1960's, Vietnam, and Middle East, and terrorisms.)

P. O. D. 1 credit 5 x week Full Year

This course divides its time between U.S. Government and Economics. There will be an in depth emphasis placed on The Foundations of Government, The Legislative Branch, The Executive Branch, The Judicial Branch, The U.S. Political System, Microeconomics, Free Enterprise, and Macroeconomics.

Along with the government and economics core, the students will also be discussing contemporary issues that occur both in our country and the world. This is course is normally scheduled during the student's senior year. *Prerequisites: Students should have taken both U.S. History and World Culture.*

Current Events Elective **.5 credit** **5 x week** **Semester**

This course will require students to examine and discuss current event issues on the local, state, national, and international level. Students will do various projects, debates, and discussions according to what is in the news that semester. *Prerequisites: This course is available to students in grades 10-12 who maintained at least a 70% average the previous year in their social studies class.*

Pennsylvania History Elective **.5 credit** **5 x week** **Semester**

This course will introduce students to the people, places, events, and history of Pennsylvania that makes our state unique. We will locate the influence of geography, economics, and government on the history of our state. The students will take notes, read, write reports, take tests, and do projects in this class. History of the state of Pennsylvania from the wilderness period up through modern times will be covered. *Prerequisites: This course is available to students in grades 10-12 who maintained at least a 70% average the previous year in their social studies class.*

American Civil War Elective **.5 credit** **5 x week** **Semester**

This course will trace the events of the American Civil War. We will look at events leading up to the first shots fired in the Civil War all the way to the Reconstruction period of American History. We will look at important people, places, and events of the American Civil War. Students will take notes, read, write reports, take tests, and do projects in this class. *Prerequisites: This course is available to students in grades 10-12 who maintained at least a 70% average the previous year in their social studies class.*

Early 20th Century World History Elective (1900s to 1950s) **.5 credit** **5 x week** **Semester**

This course will look at events that shaped the 20th Century starting with the 1900s and ending with the beginning of the Cold War in the 1950s. We will take a close look at the people, places, and events that occurred during this time frame. Students will take notes, read, write reports, take tests, and do projects in this class. *Prerequisites: This course is available to students in grades 10-12 who maintained at least a 70% average the previous year in their social studies class.*

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

The following courses should be taken by students pursuing a career in business. The Department also welcomes students concentrating on the academic curriculum, as well.

Accounting I **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course integrates basic math skills with accounting theory and practices as established by the AICPA. Students will learn various career opportunities in the fields of bookkeeping and accounting. They will also learn the accounting cycle for a proprietorship and partnership. This is accomplished by journalizing transactions, posting to a ledger, completing adjustments on an eight-column worksheet, and creating financial statements. Some emphasis is also placed on using special journals and learning to complete payroll transactions.

Accounting II **1 credit** **5x week** **Full Year**

This course is intended as a continuation of accounting principles to be taken after Accounting I. Special emphasis will be placed on special journals and accounting for a corporation. Students will also learn the following topics: accounting for un-collectible accounts, plant assets and depreciation, inventory, notes payables and receivables, accrued revenues and expenses, and corporate distribution of earnings. An

emphasis is also placed on understanding the accounting concepts established by the AICPA. Students who would like to pursue careers in business administration, finance, or accounting should consider taking this course. *Prerequisite: Accounting I passed with an 80% average*

Automated Accounting **.5 credit** **3/5 x week** **Semester/Full Year**

This course combines accounting knowledge with basic computer skills. A computerized accounting system will give students the ability to enter business transactions, generate reports and financial statements, prepare bank reconciliation, prepare checks, and other management information. Students will prepare an entire accounting cycle using the computer. *Prerequisite: Accounting I and at least one semester of Accounting II*

Advanced Office Practice **.5 credit** **5 x week** **Semester**

This course is intended to allow students to understand how it might feel to work in a typical office. They are assigned jobs to complete within a reasonable amount of time. They learn to work with limited instructor assistance, instead have a resource guide for assistance. Students also complete hands on filing unit in which they learn the rules of filing and practice using files and folders. Other topics that may be explored include: payroll, banking, and career exploration including interviewing skills. *Prerequisite: Document Processing*

Business Math **1 credit** **5 x week** **Full Year**

This course places emphasis on practical business and personal "real world" applications. Several important topics include: Payment methods, taxes, banking, investments, utility costs, spending wisely, insurance, owning and renting property, owning and leasing vehicles, and business analysis. Another aspect of the class is differentiating between useful information as opposed to nonessential data in word problems. Gaining proficiency in using a calculator and refining basic math skills (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, and percents) is also emphasized.

Business Law **.5 credit** **5x week** **Semester**

This course covers business and personal law practices. Students will learn about constitutional rights, the court system, appropriate courtroom procedures, and the key players in the legal process. Both criminal and civil action lawsuits will be discussed. Business agreements and contract, as well as other legal documents will be stressed in the class. Finally, an emphasis will be placed on business ethics in the business and corporate world. Students who want to pursue a career in the legal field or business administration should consider taking this class. *Prerequisite: Grades 10-12*

Entrepreneurship **.5 credit** **5 x week** **Semester**

This course involves students learning the steps necessary in starting a company. Students will create a business plan for a specific product or service company. The steps involved begin with understanding and researching the market and developing a product or service. Next students will research securing a loan from a leading institution or finding stockholders and investors, purchasing equipment, hiring and directing personnel, directing sales/advertising, analyzing financial statements, and dealing with required government agencies. *Prerequisite: Grades 10-12*

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE

Family and Consumer Science programs reflect the interrelationships of subject matter areas that lead to the improvement of home and family life. A .25 credit is required in grade 9.

Family and Consumer Science 9th Grade — **.5 credit** — **5 x week** — **Semester**

Ninth grade Family and Consumer Science covers many of the skills needed for adult life and a happy and healthy home and family. Some of the areas covered are money managing and budgets, child and infant care, meal planning, food preparation, clothing construction, and laundry.

Elective Family and Consumer Science I — **varies** — **varies** — **Semester/Year**

This course gives students opportunities to expand their foods, clothing, childcare, and consumer skills. Projects will be determined by skill level and completed previous project work. This course is available to students in grades 9 – 12.

Advanced Family and Consumer Science II — **varies** — **varies** — **Semester/Year**

This course will give students opportunities to master their skills in clothing construction, meal planning and preparation, consumerism, housing, and childcare development. Project assignments will be determined by student skill level and expected to be above minimum. Careers in these fields will be presented by guest speakers and class research. *Prerequisite: Students must have complete 1 year of high school elective Family and Consumer Science with an 80% or better.*

INDUSTRIAL ARTS DEPARTMENT

Courses in this department may be taken to fulfill elective requirements.

Computer Aided Drafting Design (CADD) — **.5 or 1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Semester/Full Year**

This course is designed for elective students in grades 10-12. The course would meet five days a week for a semester or full year. This course would allow students to become familiar with basic auto cad concepts, functions and commands. Students will understand the components in AutoCAD from a simple line to a completed drawing.

Drafting I — **.5 credits** — **5 x week** — **Semester**

This course will consist of a review of fundamental processes used in the drafting industry. It will allow the students to use drafting tools to complete various types of assigned drawings, starting with basic lettering drawings to completed line drawings.

Woodworking I — **varies** — **5 x week** — **Semester/Full Year**

Students will complete the safety competencies in shop, general shop safety, band saw safety handout, table saw safety handout, planer safety handout, jointer safety handout, basic first aid handout, and handheld drill safety handout. All students will work on simple woodworking assignments. The students may be asked to pay for materials in this class.

Woodworking II — **varies** — **5 x week** — **Semester/Full Year**

Students will complete the safety competencies in shop, general shop safety, band saw safety handout, table saw safety handout, planer safety handout, jointer safety handout, basic first aid handout, and handheld drill safety handout. All students will work on complex woodworking assignments. The students will be given the opportunity to build an individualized project. The students may be asked to pay for materials in this class. *Prerequisite: Woodworking I must be completed to allow students to enroll in Woodworking II.*

Horticulture .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course will cover the plant biology, process of photosynthesis, the basic requirements for plant survival, mitosis, guard cells, stoma, cacti, special plant adaptations, and respiration. Students will be taught growing chrysanthemums, poinsettia, and vegetable plant requirements. Students will work on the pesticide safety and answer questions on the pesticide unit. This class will be given a book on pesticides and will answer questions about the unit. Science standards B 2.2.2 Reading 5.7.7 are covered. Students will be given the Pennsylvania State Pesticide test for a required NOCTI test by measuring student performances. Students will understand greenhouse construction and expenses.

Agriscience .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course is designed to educate students to environmental careers. This class is structured to compete in the Envirothon, a state contest which measures student knowledge in forestry, soils, aquatic insects, and animals located in the state of Pennsylvania. The students will give four PowerPoint presentations during the semester on an insect, animal, aquatic insect, and invertebrate. This class will cover current environmental issues, past issues, and public opinion. The class will be given a book on pesticides and will answer questions from the unit. The students will be given the Pennsylvania State pesticide test to receive the private applicator license by the PA Department of Agriculture. Students will be given the chance to complete the local Envirothon contest at Kooser State Park in the spring of the year versus the other local schools.

Marketing .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course is designed to show students how marketing is used in everyday life as a consumer or business person. The class will cover small business practices with marketing. It will discuss large corporations spending millions on super bowl ads. The students will set up a corporation for using QuickBooks Pro to send invoices, collection, estimation, track expenses, and checking. The students will use the computers for tracking. Students will be taught the different types of consumers, impulse buyers, coupon cutters, sales gimmicks, and tolls used by companies to sell products.

ART

The Program of Studies in Art is designed for those students who have an interest in art as a hobby and for those who intend to enter a career in art or art-related field.

Art Elective I varies 5 x week Semester

This course focuses on the visual arts as a creative expression. Students will develop skills in a variety of media such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and fine crafts. Students will analyze their own work and relate it to themes and techniques of art from the past and from other cultures. *Prerequisites: Completed middle school curriculum.*

Advanced Art Elective varies 5 x week Semester/Full Year

This class focuses on developing advanced skills and techniques in visual arts. Students will establish artistic challenges and goals to explore. Emphasis will be placed on creative problem solving in a variety of media. Students will develop a portfolio of work that shows individual process and achievement. *Prerequisites: One high school art elective class, and achievement of an 80% average.*

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Health and Physical Education are required courses for graduation. One (1) credit is needed between the two courses to fulfill the requirement.

Health and Physical Education .4/.6 credits 2/3 x week Year

This course is offered to ninth graders. The health portion of this course educates students on the human body and what is needed to have optimal health. Optimal health includes mental and emotional health, social health, and physical health. The course provides information on the outcomes of unhealthy habits ad diseases and how they affect the body. The information provided will educate students on how to make healthy decisions. The physical education portion of the course contributes to the development and maintenance of physical fitness, motor skills, social efficiency, culture, recreational competency, and intellectual competency. The curriculum content includes individual sports, team sports, lifetime sports, Presidential Physical Fitness Test, weight training, and self testing activities.

Physical Education Elective .5/1.0 credits 5 x week Semester/Year

This course contributes to the development and maintenance of physical fitness, motor skills, social efficiency, culture, recreational competency, and intellectual competency. The curriculum content includes individual sports, team sports, lifetime sports, Presidential Physical Fitness Test; weight training, and self-testing activities.

Personal Fitness Elective .3/.6 credits 3 x week Semester/Year

Personal fitness is a physical education course designed to meet the personal fitness goals of those who participate in the class. Students will improve their cardiovascular system as well as motor control skills. Students will be educated on proper weight training techniques and cardiovascular exercise including plyometrics, agility, speed, and endurance activities. Students are also educated on safety precautions and injury prevention. Overall, the course provides lifetime fitness information and allows students to improve their personal fitness level, which improves their overall health.

COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Courses offered in this department are designed to enhance and expand students' skills in using computer hardware and software. Two credits are required between grades 9-12. (Students attending SCTC will receive .5 computer credits each year.)

Document Processing .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course teaches students that proper formatting of specific documents including resumes, various letters, envelopes, memorandums, tables, and reports. Basic use of presentation software and spreadsheet software is also learned. Students are encouraged to develop decision making skills with regard to the proper formatting of documents without direct teacher input. This course also encourages continued correct fingering technique with a degree of proficiency in accuracy and speed. Students will complete this class during their 9th grade year.

Internet Research .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course teaches students to use the internet as a researching tool. It also allows students to present that research in a usable way for the intended audience using various software types- word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation. The major topics include career exploration, post-secondary training for a career, budgeting for a typical month, as well as other smaller research projects. Emphasis is also placed on properly citing the research done and finding and using legitimate research online. *Prerequisite: Grade 10-12*

Web Page Design Elective .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course teaches students to create Web pages using a variety of software. Students will learn basic HTML, as well as programs specifically designed to create web pages and web sites. Students will learn various purposes for creating web sites and design them keeping the user or audience in mind. This is a project based course. *Prerequisites: Grades 10-12*

Student Technician Program varies 5x week Semester/Full Year

Each participant in this course will be a Technical Assistant to SSSD's Technology Department, assisting in all aspects of technology support. Participants will learn to assemble/dissemble, connect, troubleshoot, and inventory technology equipment. Additionally, participants will become "technology helpers," helping SSSD teachers introduce and use technology in their classrooms. Students will also learn to use, maintain, troubleshoot, and inventory district audio and video equipment. All participants will be required to complete one project per grading period agreed upon between the student and instructor. Instructor will grade using the rubric system with an emphasis on work ethic, attitude, dependability, motivation, time management, etc. *Prerequisites – Include a general working knowledge of computers, a written letter of recommendation by a faculty member, an essay, and a signed statement of ethics. A maximum of five students will be admitted to the course and are selected at the discretion of the instructor.*

Microsoft Certification Preparation .5 credit 5 x week Semester

The Windows Certification Preparation course is designed to prepare the participants to achieve Windows MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist) certification. The courses purpose is to afford the student the opportunity to achieve the MOS certification before graduation. This course will focus intensively on Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. Students should expect to achieve at an advanced user level. In addition, students will also learn about the individual certifications as well as the certification process. This course is Windows intensive and only senior students with a strong Windows foundation and an interest in pursuing certification will be admitted to the course. Also, students should note that certification must be done on the student's time and at the student's expense. *Prerequisite: Document Processing*

DRIVERS' THEORY

The classroom Driver's Theory class is a requirement for graduation. Generally the classroom part Drivers Theory is taken during the 10th grade year of high school. The behind the wheel training is offered by appointment and is not required for graduation.

Drivers' Theory .5 credit 5 x week Semester

This course concentrates on the rules of the road, laws of nature, and moral obligations of a driver in our highway transportation system. The course also introduces students to many driving situations that they should be thinking about before they obtain their driving license. This class will prepare them for their permit and driving test. Students should take this class during the school year that they turn 16 years old and will receive their learner's permit, usually 10th grade. Class is scheduled according to birthday.

Behind the Wheel Training No credit 6 Hours By Appointment

This training is given by appointment only with the teacher. The student must sign up for training once they receive their learner's permit. Training will take place as soon as a permission slip is completed and turned into the teacher. Training is also based upon availability of student to drive after school or on possible Saturdays. Six hours of training is needed with the 30 hours of class room theory to receive a

letter for a possible insurance reduction by your car insurance company. Students will finish as quickly as scheduling allows.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

The Music Department provides a curriculum designed to accommodate all aspects of music. These courses will provide instruction to students of varying levels of musical ability and accomplishments. Musical ensembles, such as Band and Chorus, will also provide students the opportunity to perform in public the materials presented in class.

Band — **.6 credit** — **3 x week** — **Full Year**

This course is open to students in grades 9-12 who wish to continue their musical development and to build upon the proficiency level obtained in primary and intermediate instrumental classes by playing in group and individual performance situations. Band meets M-W-F and will include one lesson per week. Course includes five public performances throughout the year.

Chorus — **.4 credit** — **2 x week** — **Full Year**

Senior Chorus is an elective course open to students in grades 9-12. It is designed to develop singing and performing skills through part-singing, to develop music reading skills, and to develop an understanding of interpretation and expression of music. A variety of musical styles will be performed throughout the course. Course includes two public performances – one in December and one in the spring.

Ensemble — **1 credit** — **5 x week** — **Full Year**

Senior High Vocal Ensemble is designed to further develop performing skills and part-singing as well as an opportunity for more independent singing with a smaller performing group. Two public performances – one in December and one in the spring are required for this course. This course is available to students in grades 9 – 12. *Prerequisites: One year of high school or middle school chorus. If the class is expected to grow beyond half the chorus class size, teacher permission is required to keep the number of students smaller then the chorus size.*

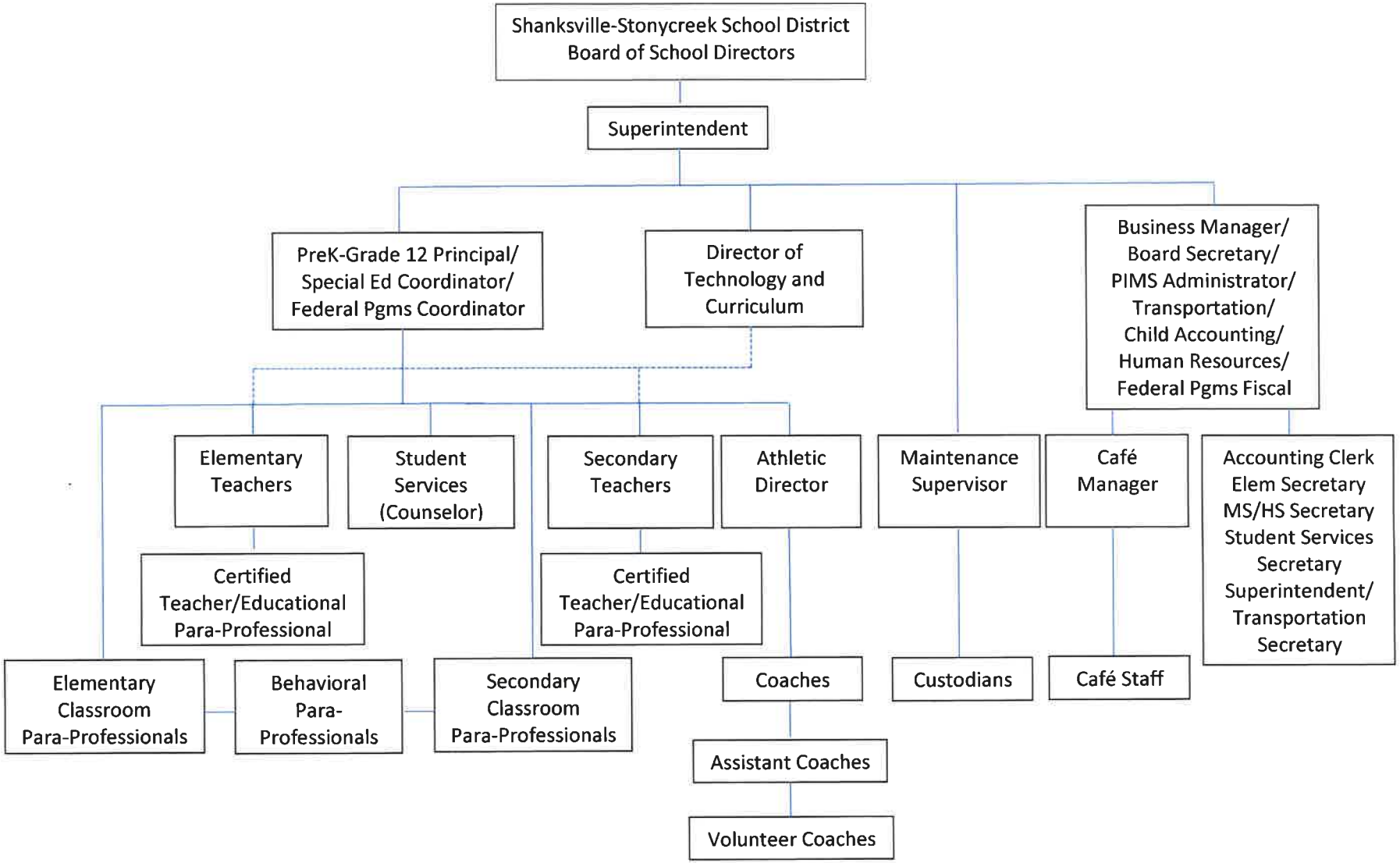
Music Elective — **.5 credit** — **5 x week** — **Semester**

This course is intended for students in grades 10-12 who are interested in expanding their knowledge and understanding of music. Areas covered will include: playing secondary instruments, instrument pedagogy, conducting, theory, ear training, history, and composition. *Prerequisites: Musical Lessons (3 years)*

Sidney Clark
Attachment #5

SHANKSVILLE-STONYCREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



July 1, 2021

Sidney Clark Attachment #6

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STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

SEAL OF TRANSPARENCY PLATINUM GuideStar

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2023-24 Plato Course Catalog

Middle and High School Core Courses

**Semester A/B denotes full year or 1 credit course

English

English 6, Semester A/B
English 7, Semester A/B
English 8, Semester A/B
English 9, Semester A/B
English 10, Semester A/B
English 11, Semester A/B
English 12, Semester A/B

Math

Math 6, Semester A/B
Math 7, Semester A/B
Math 8, Semester A/B
Algebra 1, Semester A/B
Algebra 2, Semester A/B
Consumer Mathematics
Financial Mathematics, Semester A/B
Geometry, Semester A/B
Mathematics I, Semester A/B
Mathematics II, Semester A/B
Mathematics III, Semester A/B
Precalculus, Semester A/B
Probability and Statistics

Social Studies

Contemporary World, Semester A/B
Civics
Economics
Middle School Civics, Semester A/B
Middle School Contemporary World, Semester A/B
Middle School US History, Semester A/B
Middle School World History, Semester A/B
US Government
US History, Semester A/B
World Geography, Semester A/B
World History Survey, Semester A/B
World History, Semester A/B

Science

Science 6, Semester A/B
Science 6 with Virtual Labs, Semester A/B
Science 7, Semester A/B
Science 7 with Virtual Labs, Semester A/B
Science 8, Semester A/B
Science 8 with Virtual Labs, Semester A/B
Biology, Semester A/B
Biology with Virtual Labs, Semester A/B
Chemistry, Semester A/B
Earth and Space Science, Semester A/B
High School Earth and Space Science, Semester A/B
Integrated Physics and Chemistry Semester A/B
Life Science, Semester A/B
Middle School Earth and Space Science, Semester A/B
Middle School Life Science, Semester A/B
Middle School Physical Science, Semester A/B
Physical Science, Semester A/B
Physics, Semester A/B

Middle and High School Elective Courses

** A/B denotes full year or 1 credit course

3D Modeling 1, A/B
Academic Success
Advertising and Sales Promotion
African American History
Agriscience 1
Agriscience 2
Animation 1, A/B
Anthropology 1
Anthropology 2
Archaeology
Art History and Appreciation
Art in World Cultures
Artificial Intelligence
Astronomy 1, A/B
Biotechnology 1, A/B
Business English, Semester A/B
Careers in Criminal Justice 1 A/B
Certified Nurse Aide, Semester A/B
Coding 1, A/B
Computing for College and Careers
Concepts of Engineering and Technology
Cosmetology 1
Cosmetology 2
Cosmetology 3, A/B
Creative Writing
Criminology
Culinary Arts 1, Semester A/B
Culinary Arts 2
Cybersecurity 1, A/B
Digital Photography 1, A/B
Digital Photograph 2
Early Learning Education 1, A/B
Entrepreneurship, Semester A/B
Fashion Design
Forensics
Forensic Science 1
Forensic Science 2
Foundations of Green Energy, Semester A/B
Forestry and Natural Resources
Gothic Literature
Health Science 1
Health Science 2
High School Career Discovery
History of the Holocaust
Hospitality and Tourism 1
Hospitality and Tourism 2, A/B
Human and Social Services
Human Geography
Interior Design
International Business
Journalism 1, A/B
Law and Order
Learning in a Digital World
Manufacturing
Marine Science
Middle School 2D Studio Art
Middle School Exploring Business
Middle School Coding 1, Semester A/B
Middle School Digital Art and Design
Middle School Exploring Music
Middle School Game Design 1, Semester A/B
Middle School Career Explorations 1
Middle School Career Explorations 2
Middle School Exploring Health Science
Middle School Exploring Information Technology
Middle School Journalism
Middle School Photography 1, Semester A/B
Military Careers
Music Appreciation
Mythology and Folklore
National Security
Networking Fundamentals, A/B
Peer Counseling
Personal and Family Finance
Personal Psychology 1
Personal Psychology 2
Philosophy
Principles of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
Principles of Architecture and Construction, A/B
Principles of Public Service
Public Speaking 1, A/B
Real World Parenting
Reading and Writing for Purpose
Renewable Technologies
Restaurant Management
Robotics I, Semester A/B
Social Media
Social Problems 1
Social Problems 2
Sociology 1
Sociology 2
Sports and Entertainment Marketing
Structure of Writing
Theater, Cinema & Film Production, A/B
Veterinary Science
Women's Studies
Workplace and Internship Readiness
World Religions

World Languages

**Other languages available once teacher is identified

Spanish 1, Semester A/B
Spanish 2, Semester A/B
Spanish 3, Semester A/B
French 1, Semester A/B
French 2, Semester A/B

Advanced Placement

** indicates materials needed.

AP Biology, Semester A/B
AP Calculus, Semester A/B
AP Chemistry, Semester A/B
AP Computer Science
AP English Language and Composition, Semester A/B **
AP English Literature & Composition, Semester A/B
AP Environmental Science, Semester A/B **
AP Macroeconomics
AP Microeconomics
AP Psychology
AP Statistics, Semester A/B
AP US History, Semester A/B

Test Prep

Preparation for the GED Test - Math
Preparation for the GED Test – RLA
Preparation for the GED Test – Science
Preparation for the GED Test – Social Studies
ACT English
ACT Mathematics
ACT Reading
ACT Science Reasoning
ASVAB Mathematics
ASVAB Technology and General Science Part 1 and Part 2
ASVAB Word Knowledge and Paragraph Comprehension
SAT Mathematics
SAT Reading
SAT Writing and Language

PE, Health and Fitness

Health
Physical Education
Middle School Health
Middle School Fitness

Adaptive Physical Education
Advanced Physical Education 1
Advanced Physical Education 2
Anatomy
Comprehensive Physical Education
Drugs and Alcohol
Exercise Science
Family and Consumer Science
Family Living and Healthy Relationships
First Aid and Safety
Fitness Basics 1
Fitness Basics 2
Fitness Fundamentals 1
Fitness Fundamentals 2
Flexibility Training
Group Sports
Health & Personal Wellness
Health 1: Life Management Skills
Health Careers
Health Science (Nursing)
Health Science (Public Health)
HOPE 1
HOPE 2
Individual Sports
Intro to Coaching
Intro to Group Sports 1
Intro to Group Sports 2
Intro to Individual Sports 1
Intro to Individual Sports 2
Intro to Nursing 1
Intro to Nursing 2
Life Skills
Lifetime & Leisure Sports
Medical Terminology
Nutrition
Nutrition and Wellness
Outdoor Sports
Personal Health & Fitness
Personal Fitness
Personal Training Career Prep
Personal Training Concepts
Physiology
Running
Sports Officiating
Strength Training
Walking Fitness

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Testimony to the Basic Education Funding Commission
Pennsylvania Economy League Central LLC
November 9, 2023

Introduction

Good morning. My name is Lynne Shedlock, and I am the acting executive director of the Pennsylvania Economy League, an over 85-year-old non-profit, non-partisan public policy research organization. We would like to thank the Basic Education Funding Commission members for the opportunity to provide insight on school district mergers and consolidations[1].

Our testimony is based on work we have completed on several school district merger/consolidation projects and considerable independent research on the topic, including PEL's 2009 study, *Municipal Merger/Consolidation and Sharing of Services*. PEL also provided peer review for the Independent Fiscal Office's (IFO) 2014 report, *Fiscal Implications of a York County School District Consolidation.*

Local government mergers and consolidations are often explored to save money. PEL's experience, and the research of numerous studies consulted for this testimony, is that mergers and consolidations do not save money in the short term and in fact can incur significant costs.

There is an assumption, however, that combining districts will save money in the long-term and create a stronger tax base to provide future revenue. A larger district can also offer more opportunities to students in terms of curriculum offerings, extra curriculars and more. What would the quality of public education in the Commonwealth be, for instance, if it still had 2,361 school districts as it did in 1960?

State legislation mandating mergers in the 1960s eventually resulted in 501 school districts — as well as a lot of hard feelings about the process. Since then, there has been only one successful consolidation. The bottom line is that there are too many impediments in the current system for consolidations to happen naturally.

That does not mean that the state, which creates the rules under which districts operate, should abandon the idea. The state should instead develop new policies and procedures that encourage merger and consolidation where it makes sense, while recognizing that not all districts are good candidates. Even if wholesale structural consolidation cannot be attained, there can be benefits to functional consolidation of programs and more.

"Structural consolidation/merger is a complex and time-consuming process, with a high probability of failure based on the historical record," as we noted in *Municipal Merger/Consolidation and Sharing of Services*. "On the other hand, functional consolidation presents more realistic and significant opportunities to share services as opposed to structural consolidation."

---

[1] A word on terms. Merger means one school district is absorbed by another. Consolidation means two school districts combine into a new district. For purposes of this testimony, the terms are use interchangeably.

Square Boxes in Round Holes

One-time and ongoing costs from a merger are not insignificant as districts must "level-up" to the higher of the two union salary schedules for teaching and non-teaching staff. Districts must mesh different curriculums, different educational philosophies, different demographics and more.

Transportation can be one of the biggest challenges. Geographical realities like mountains can result in unacceptably long bus rides and/or high transportation costs. Developing new routes can be extremely complex. Which facilities to keep and how to configure grades within buildings is a major issue. A school district merger study PEL performed recently resulted in no less than five different building and grade configuration options for two small rural school districts.

Fiscal realities are another factor. One school district might be swimming in debt. Another might be running deficits. The partner school district likely does not want to assume those liabilities. This can be true even if the partner district is financially teetering itself and could benefit from a larger tax base.

The findings from the IFO report on York County school districts are instructive. Ongoing costs from consolidation (salary increases and loss of state funds under the current system) were likely to be more than $16 million higher than anticipated savings. Median income homeowners living in a median value house in most of the county's existing school districts would pay higher taxes under a consolidation[2].

No specific state funds exist to defray the costs of consolidation studies or the actual consolidation itself. As shown in the York case, schools anticipated *losing* money for transportation because of the demographics in a county-wide district.

Local identity is another important consideration, particularly as this identity applies to sports teams and other school-related community groups. It's often said that the hardest animal to kill is a school mascot. School districts provide a community identity in many areas of the Commonwealth that can cause resistance to mergers. Locally elected school boards provide actual, as well as the perception of, local control and this perception can have a direct impact on a school board's decisions in a merger or consolidation process.

Challenges and Opportunities

School districts can face many challenges that make the idea of consolidation appealing. Apart from fiscal concerns, other considerations are shrinking enrollment and excess capacity of buildings, classroom space, staff and programs. Less students can result in less course offerings and thus less opportunity, particularly in advanced level courses, languages and more specialized subjects. The same is true of extracurriculars.

More recent events, like the post-pandemic teacher shortage and the Basic Education Funding Commission's own mission to review the distribution of state funding to school districts, justifiably raises questions of whether consolidation could be part of the answer.

Despite the impediments and given the local government realities in Pennsylvania, PEL has long called for more service consolidation. Consolidation and merger might not save money in the short term, but it can save or enhance programs that otherwise would become unaffordable. Under the

[2] *Fiscal Implications of a York County School District Consolidation,* 2014, the Independent Fiscal Office

right conditions, consolidation and merger can provide a stronger tax base and more student opportunities.

Recommendations

PEL recommends a phased approach when considering merger or consolidation. First consider sharing programs, combining extracurriculars or allowing students in one district to attend an Advanced Placement or language course not offered by the other district. Sharing models already exist in the Commonwealth in the form of regional Intermediate Units and Vo-Tech schools. Moreover, technology now allows sharing of courses between districts without the need for transportation.

High school is a less complicated place to start than elementary school, which generally involves more buildings and more transportation issues.

To assist school districts in determining whether merger or consolidation would work for them, PEL worked with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association to develop the checklist below, which begins with a self-assessment. The checklist considers identifying potential partners as well as academic programs, student services, district governance, staffing patterns and bargaining agreements, operations and facilities, finances and tax base, and community involvement.

PEL has also provided the commission with the process used for consolidation and merger. Unlike municipal mergers and consolidation, which are contingent on approval by both residents and the governing bodies, there is little role for the public. The public does not vote on a school merger or consolidation, nor is there a procedure for the public to initiate a school district merger or consolidation. While this simplifies the process, it also means the public has less direct input other than through public hearings. Consider requiring input not only from the public but also from students in grades 9 to 12. It is these students that will be affected most by a merger/consolidation.

Finally, state funds are needed to pay for studies to investigate whether and how a merger would work, or if sharing of programs, personnel or facilities is an option. Money is also needed for the start-up costs associated with the actual consolidation. It is doubtful that the current situation will change unless the state offers much more in the way of financial incentives and/or mandates to encourage the process.

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School District Consolidation and Merger Checklist Overview[3]

The following checklist directs school districts and communities through data collection and analysis. It serves to provide information for ongoing discussions and provides a common reference point to guide those discussions. Please note that all data requirements set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to date have been included in this checklist.

1.0 Deliberation	2.0 Identifying Potential Consolidation Partners	Ally With Districts: 3.0 Academic Programs
1.1 Describe Current School District Environment 1.2 Generate Predictive Data 1.3 Perform an Academic Self-Assessment 1.4 Anticipate Significant Events or Changes 1.5 Identify Advantageous Shared Resource Opportunities	2.1 District Policies and Procedures 2.2 General Operations and Staff Levels 2.3 List of Course Offerings 2.4 Grade Configurations 2.5 Facility Capacity and Use 2.6 Enrollment Patterns 2.7 Achievement Measures 2.8 Demographic Characteristics and a Common Sense of Community	3.1 General Overview 3.2 Curriculum Development 3.3 Programs by Grade Level 3.4 Special Education 3.5 Cross-District Schools
Ally With Districts: 4.0 Student Services	**Ally With Districts: 5.0 District Governance**	**Ally With Districts: 6.0 Staffing Patterns and Bargaining Agreements**
4.1 Student Activities 4.2 Social Activities 4.3 Athletic Programs 4.4 Extracurricular and Community Programs	5.1 Administration 5.2 Strategic Planning and Curriculum Development 5.3 Education Partners 5.4 Special Circumstances	6.1 Existing Staffing 6.2 Collective Bargaining Agreements
Ally With Districts: 7.0 Operations and Facilities	**Ally With Districts: 8.0 Finances/Tax Base**	**Ally With Districts: 9.0 Community Involvement**
7.1 Facility Assessment 7.2 Facility Cost Estimates 7.3 Transportation Analysis 7.4 Merging Services and District Operations	8.1 District Revenues 8.2 Equalizing the Tax Base 8.3 Examining Expenditures	9.1 Identify Stakeholders 9.2 Setting Expectations 9.3 Role of the Community 9.4 Communications Plan

[3] This table is an overview of the checklist. For the complete 14-page checklist, please contact the Pennsylvania Economy League.

Consolidation and Merger Process

The school district merger process contains four public votes (two each by the representative school boards) and does not directly involve the public except through public meetings and hearings for public comment.

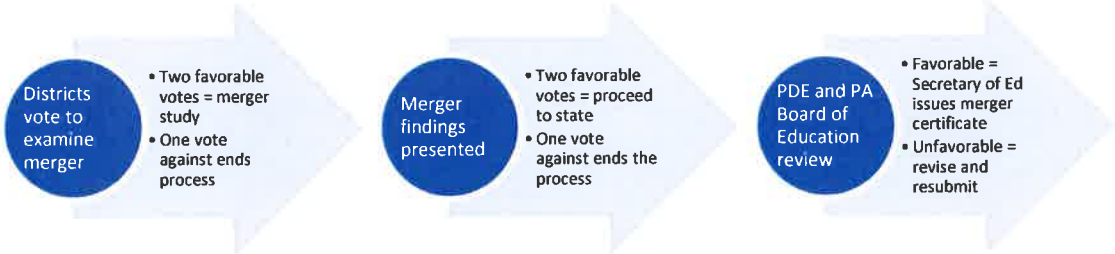
The merger of two districts is at its root a merger of the educational delivery of a state-supported function of public education. School districts in Pennsylvania share much in common with each other due to the same mandates and regulatory oversight of the Commonwealth's Department of Education (PDE). State funding and oversight has also created common accounting and reporting requirements.

School districts in the Commonwealth are governed by the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 as amended and other legislation, by regulations of the State Board of Education, and by standards of the State Department of Education. These laws, regulations, and standards impart a considerable amount of discretionary power to locally elected school boards and district superintendents.

School districts in Pennsylvania represent a mixture of Commonwealth authority and local status as a school district, as well as status as a "government" entity with taxing powers like local municipalities in the Commonwealth. School districts collect approximately 60 to 70 percent of all local real estate taxes levied in the Commonwealth.

The state Public School Code establishes basic procedures for a merger of school districts.

- A majority vote (five of nine members) of all boards involved is required.
- An application must be filed with the Secretary of Education.
- The State Board of Education must approve the application. Approval is to be granted by the State Board of Education as it deems appropriate and in the best interests of the education system of the Commonwealth. If the State Board of Education does not approve, the application must be referred to the applying districts for resubmission in accordance with the recommendations of the State Board of Education.
- The Secretary of Education issues a certificate creating the new school district. The certificate lists the district name, components, classification, and the effective date of operation.



Other sections of the Public School Code that affect mergers of school districts include the treatment of existing indebtedness of the merged school districts, provisions for the amicable adjustment and apportionment of debt and property, and provisions for the election of school directors in the merged district.

As part of the process of voting to approve a merger, the boards of the merging complement school districts must agree on at least six items:

- The name of the school district.
- The name of the superintendent, salary, and length of contract.
- The administrative structure of the district.
- The buildings to be operated by the district.
- Which area vocational technical school the new districts' pupils will attend.
- The timeframe for the merger.

November 9, 2023

Basic Education Commission Testimony

PENNSYLVANIA ECONOMY LEAGUE

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School District Consolidation and Merger

- **Myth**
  - Saves money in the short-term.
- **Reality**
  - Likely costs money in the short-term
  - Faces significant impediments
- **Opportunities**
  - Maintain or grow programs
  - More robust curriculum, extracurriculars, etc.
  - Belief that it saves money in long-term and creates a stronger tax base
- **Drivers**
  - Declining enrollment
  - Fiscal problems
  - Loss/reduction of programs
- **Historical**
  - Mass consolidation in 1960s/70s shrunk from 2,361 districts to 500 districts
  - Created hard feelings
  - Only one consolidation/merger since then

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Impediments to Merger/Consolidation

- Cost to "level up" salaries and wages for teachers and others
- Different curriculum, educational philosophies, demographics
- Transportation challenges
  - Geographical impediments (mountains etc.)
  - Longer bus rides
  - Higher costs for longer routes
- Reconciling facilities and grades (elementary, middle, high school)
- Finances of partner districts
  - Deficits or large amount of debt is deterrent
- Cost of studies, plans and implementation
  - No dedicated state funding source
- School district provides local identity
  - The hardest animal to kill is a school mascot

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Recommendations

- Phased Approach
  - Share courses
  - Combine extracurriculars
  - Technology and existing models
  - Start at high school level
- PEL/PSBA check list or similar review
  - Potential partners
  - Self-assessment
- State Role
  - Consider current public process
  - Provide funds and incentives

Center for RURAL Pennsylvania

A LEGISLATIVE AGENCY OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Testimony of Kyle C. Kopko, Ph.D., J.D.
Executive Director of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Good morning, members of the Basic Education Funding Commission. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before the Commission. My name is Dr. Kyle C. Kopko, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

As you know, the Center is a bipartisan, bicameral legislative research agency of the General Assembly. The Center's legislative mandates include two broad charges: 1) conducting and sponsoring applied policy research to benefit our rural communities; and 2) maintaining a comprehensive database of statistical indicators to assist policymakers in meeting the needs of rural Pennsylvania. I will use information from this database to discuss a variety of population and demographic trends across the Commonwealth. It is my hope that these data will be useful to the Commission as it considers strategies to support schools and students in the coming years.

Along with this written testimony, I have submitted a series of data visualizations that depict Pennsylvania population trends over time. The data visualizations provide a greater level of detail and more information than what I present in this written statement. However, I wish to highlight several key findings for the purpose of this hearing:

1. Based upon recent population projections produced in partnership with the Pennsylvania State Data Center, Pennsylvania's overall population growth rate will diminish considerably in the coming years.
2. The projected population change across the Commonwealth will not be uniform. That is, some regions will experience steady growth over time, while other regions will experience steady declines.
3. The overall change in population is primarily driven by natural population change (i.e., an increase in deaths and a decrease in births).
4. Pennsylvania can expect an increase in the number of older Pennsylvanians (those 65 years old and older), and a decrease in the number of young people (less than 20 years old).

Overall, these findings likely suggest decreased enrollment in many school districts, which, in turn, may raise the per student cost of education and eventually reduce demand for teachers and school buildings.

Before discussing the findings of our empirical analysis, it is important to provide a brief description of our research methodology. We relied on a variety of data sources from both federal and state agencies to produce the enclosed data visualizations. Throughout our analysis, we define rural as an area with a population density below the statewide rate of 291 people per square mile. All

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Harrisburg, PA 17120
Phone (717) 787-9555
www.rural.pa.gov

other areas are classified as urban.

The population projections that will be discussed throughout my testimony were made possible through the Center's research grant program, and our long-standing partnership with the State Data Center at Penn State Harrisburg. The State Data Center estimated county-level population projections for each county in Pennsylvania through the year 2050. These projections are based upon U.S. Census data and projected births, deaths, and migration patterns. More information on the population projections can be found on our website: www.rural.pa.gov/data/population-projections.

I. Population Bifurcation

The population projections discussed above suggest that Pennsylvania's population will grow by just 1.6 percent between 2020 and 2050. As a point of reference, Pennsylvania's population grew at approximately 2.4 percent between 2010 and 2020.

These projections suggest that Pennsylvania's population will continue a long-standing pattern of regional bifurcation. That is, population is generally growing in the southeast region, while population is generally declining in other parts of the Commonwealth. By the southeast, we are including counties that are east of Interstate 81 from Franklin to Lebanon counties and south of Interstate 78 from Berks to Northampton counties. However, as noted in the included data visualizations, there are some exceptions to this regional bifurcation. For example, counties like Centre County, Indiana County, and Union County are projected to experience population growth. However, these counties are home to significant "group quarters," including universities and prisons.

When applying the Center's definition of rural and urban counties to the projections, the population in rural counties is expected to decline by 5.8 percent, while urban counties are expected to grow by 4.1 percent. Although Pennsylvania's overall population is expected to grow slightly in the coming decades, the non-uniform nature of this change by region will mean local and state officials will need to adopt strategies to meet the specific local needs resulting from a changing population.

II. Factors Affecting Population Change

Population change is driven by two factors: natural population change (i.e., births and deaths) and net migration (i.e., in-migration and out-migration). While Pennsylvania has generally experienced positive net migration in recent years, that trend has not been uniform. Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, net migration in rural counties was negative since 2005, while urban counties have witnessed positive net migration patterns. However, the primary driver of population change is an imbalance between births and deaths. Over time, Pennsylvania's birth rate has steadily declined, while its death rate has steadily increased. This has resulted in a relative increase in the number of Pennsylvanians who are 65 years of age or older, and a relative decrease in the number of people under the age of 20. As a point of reference, in 2020, 26 counties had more senior citizens (65 years of age or older), relative to people under 20. By the end of this decade, the population projections suggest that 53 counties will have more senior citizens than young people.

III. Changes in School District Enrollments

The population projections noted above will necessarily affect the number of school-aged children

across the Commonwealth, and the demand for teachers and school buildings. Based upon projections from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the statewide enrollment rate for school-aged students will decline by 6.7 percent by the 2032-2033 school year. However, this change will not be uniform, with much of the growth in the next ten years occurring in the southeast and in urban counties.

Based upon the Department of Education projections, the Center was able to estimate an average student-to-teacher ratio and student-to-building ratio, relying on a three-year average of the last three school years. The building ratio is specific to elementary school buildings. While this is admittedly an imperfect methodological approach, by holding the ratios constant over time policy makers can better understand how changes in projected enrollment and population affect the demand for teachers and school buildings. As the data visualizations included with my testimony indicate, there will be approximately a 7.0 percent decline in the demand for classroom teachers, and approximately a 5.5 percent decline in the demand for elementary school buildings.

IV. Conclusion

The results that I have discussed as part of this presentation are consistent with regional trends. What is happening in Pennsylvania, particularly in our rural communities, is not unlike demographic trends that have, or are expected to occur, in western New York, Ohio, West Virginia, and western Maryland. In brief, the trends we are now experiencing have been decades in the making.

While these changes will be challenging for many communities, I am confident that with advanced planning and appropriate resources, school districts and local officials across the Commonwealth can use this information to adapt to changing population conditions. To that end, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania is happy to serve as a resource for any communities who could benefit from data and information to aid in their long-term planning efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Commission, and I welcome the opportunity to answer your questions.

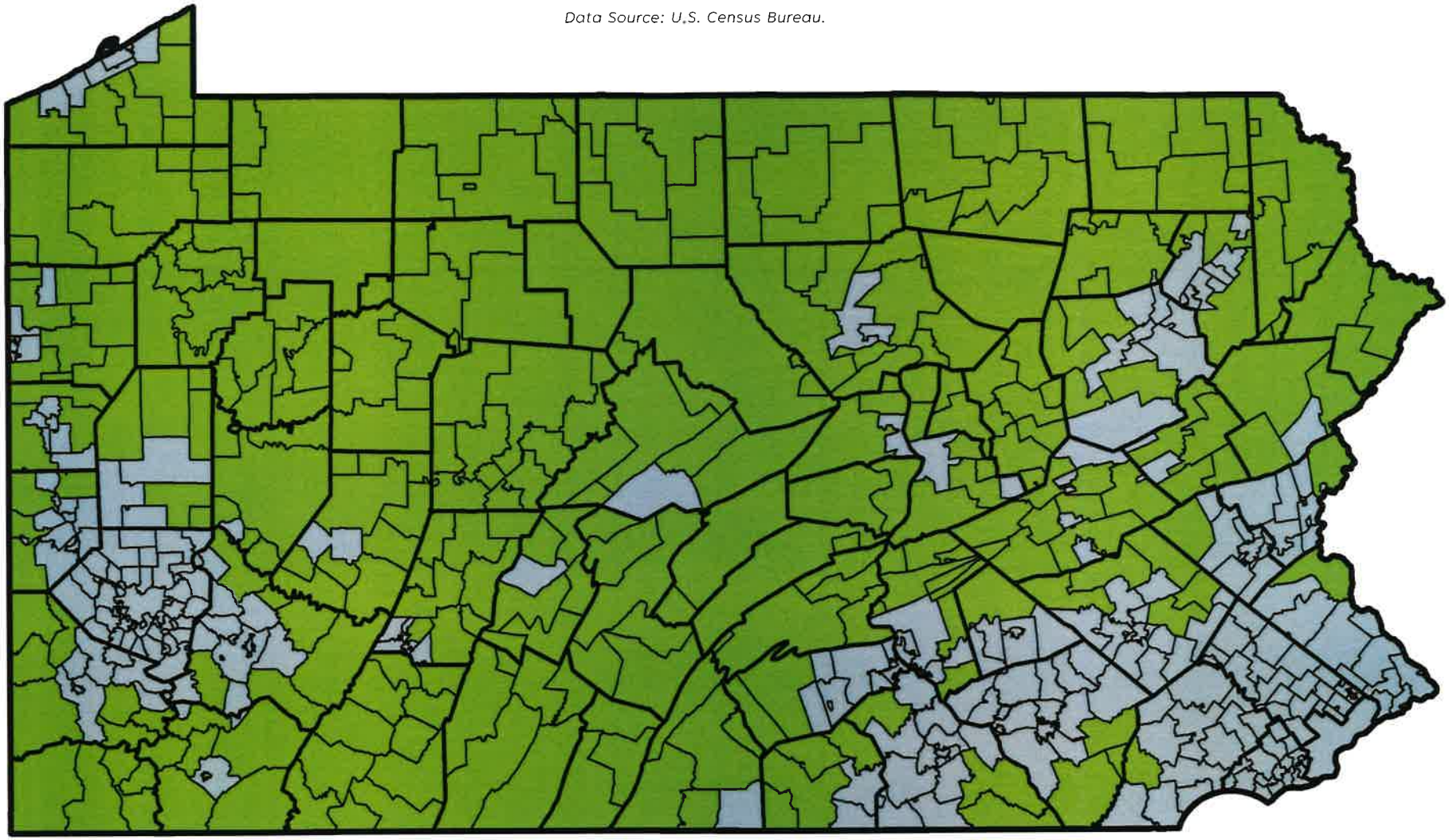
Center for RURAL Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Demographic Trends and Their Implications for Public Education

Kyle C. Kopko, Ph.D., J.D.
Executive Director, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
Phone: (717) 787-9555 | Web: www.rural.pa.gov
Testimony Before the Basic Education Funding Commission
November 9, 2023
Bedford, Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Rural and Urban School Districts, 2020

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau.



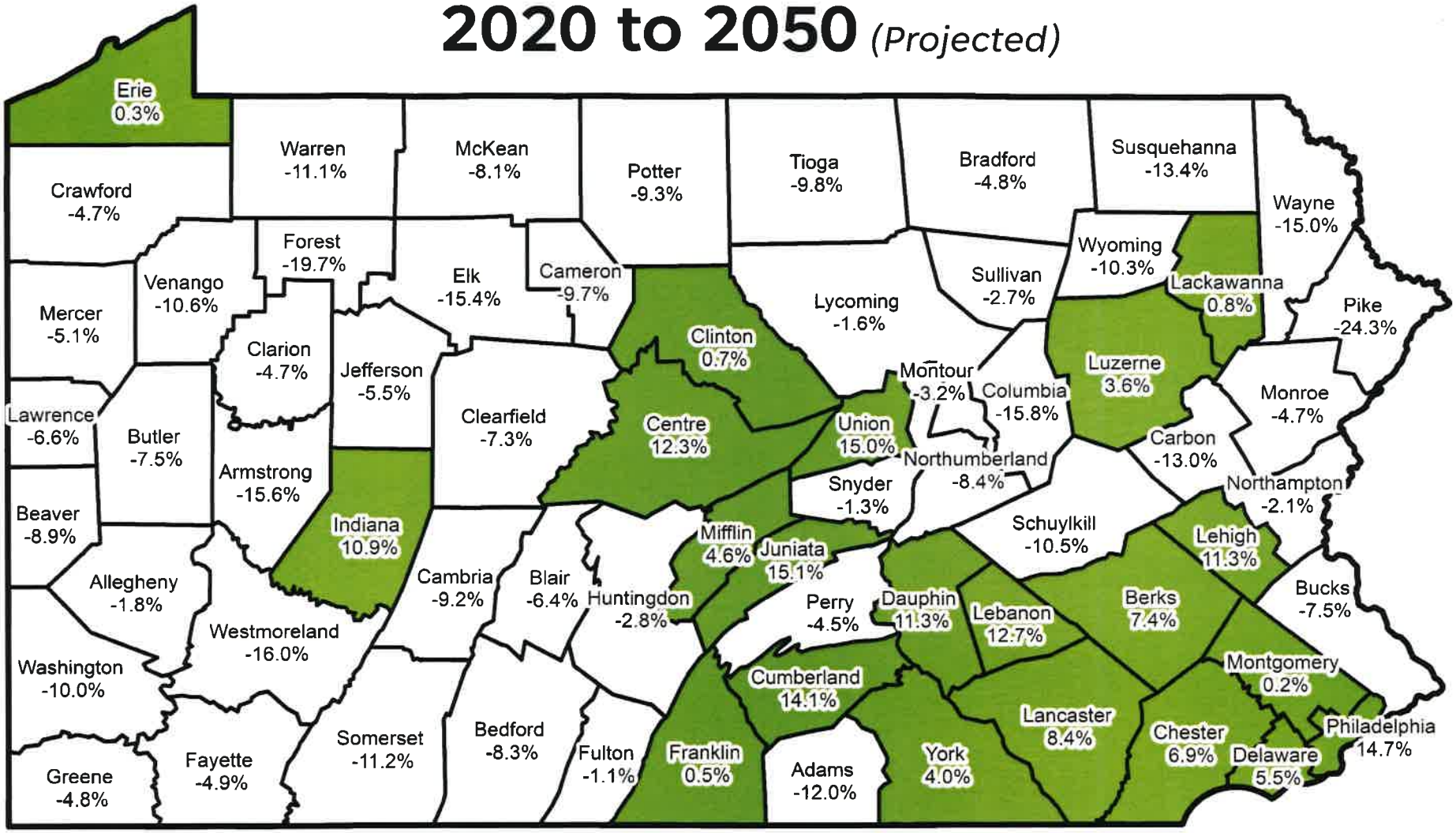
Urban
Rural

	Rural Districts	Urban Districts
# School Districts	238	262
Avg. District Enrollment, 2022-23	1,563	4,365
% Chg. 2012-13 to 2022-23	-12.7%	-4.5%

Center for RURAL Pennsylvania

Population Change

Population Change by County, 2020 to 2050 *(Projected)*



Statewide Population Change, 2020 to 2050 (proj.) = 1.6%

Decrease or No Change

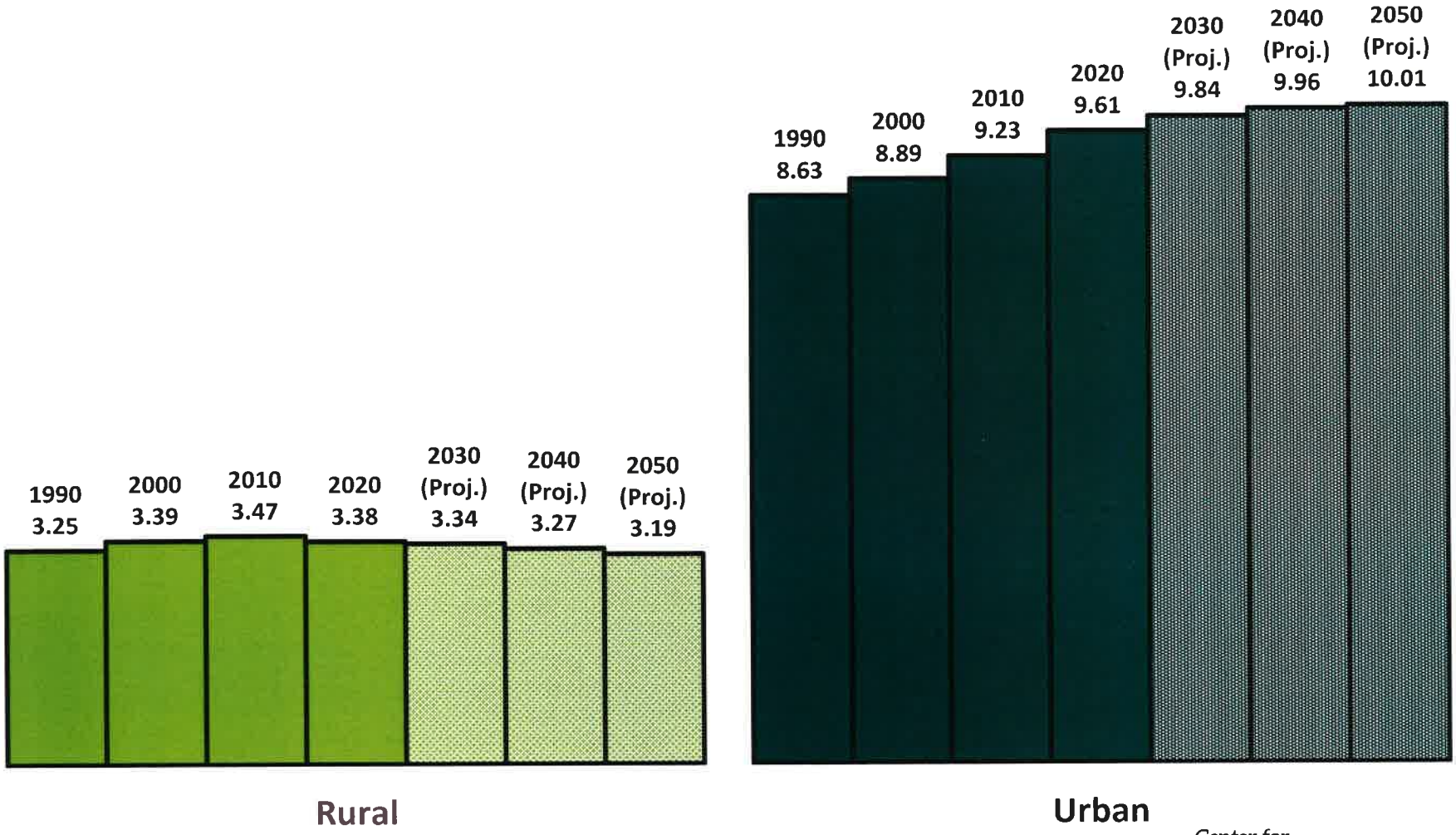
Increase

Center for RURAL Pennsylvania

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Pennsylvania State Data Center.

Pennsylvania Rural and Urban Counties Population, 1990 to 2050

(Projected) (in Millions)



Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Pennsylvania State Data Center.

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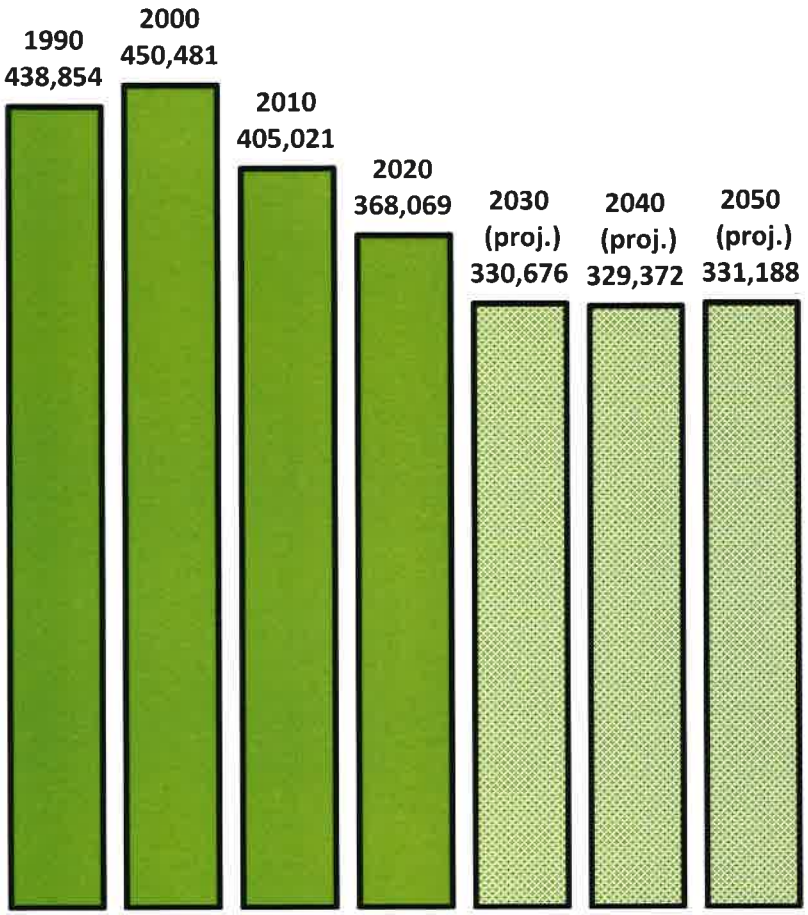
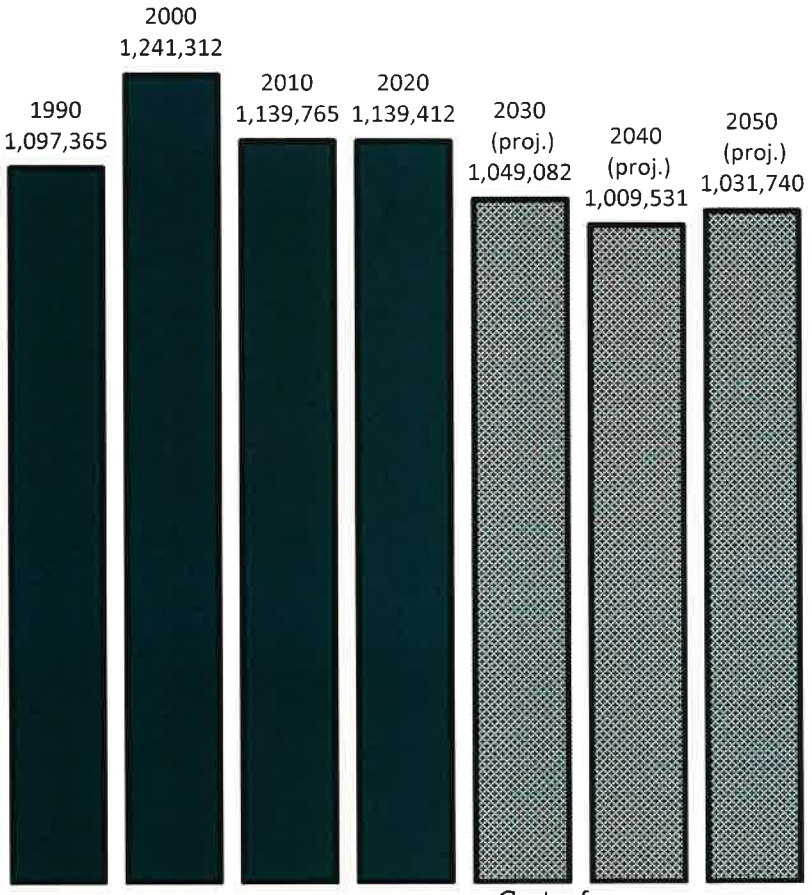
Causes of Population Change

Children 5 to 14 Years Old in Rural and Urban Pennsylvania, 1990 to 2050 *(Projected)*

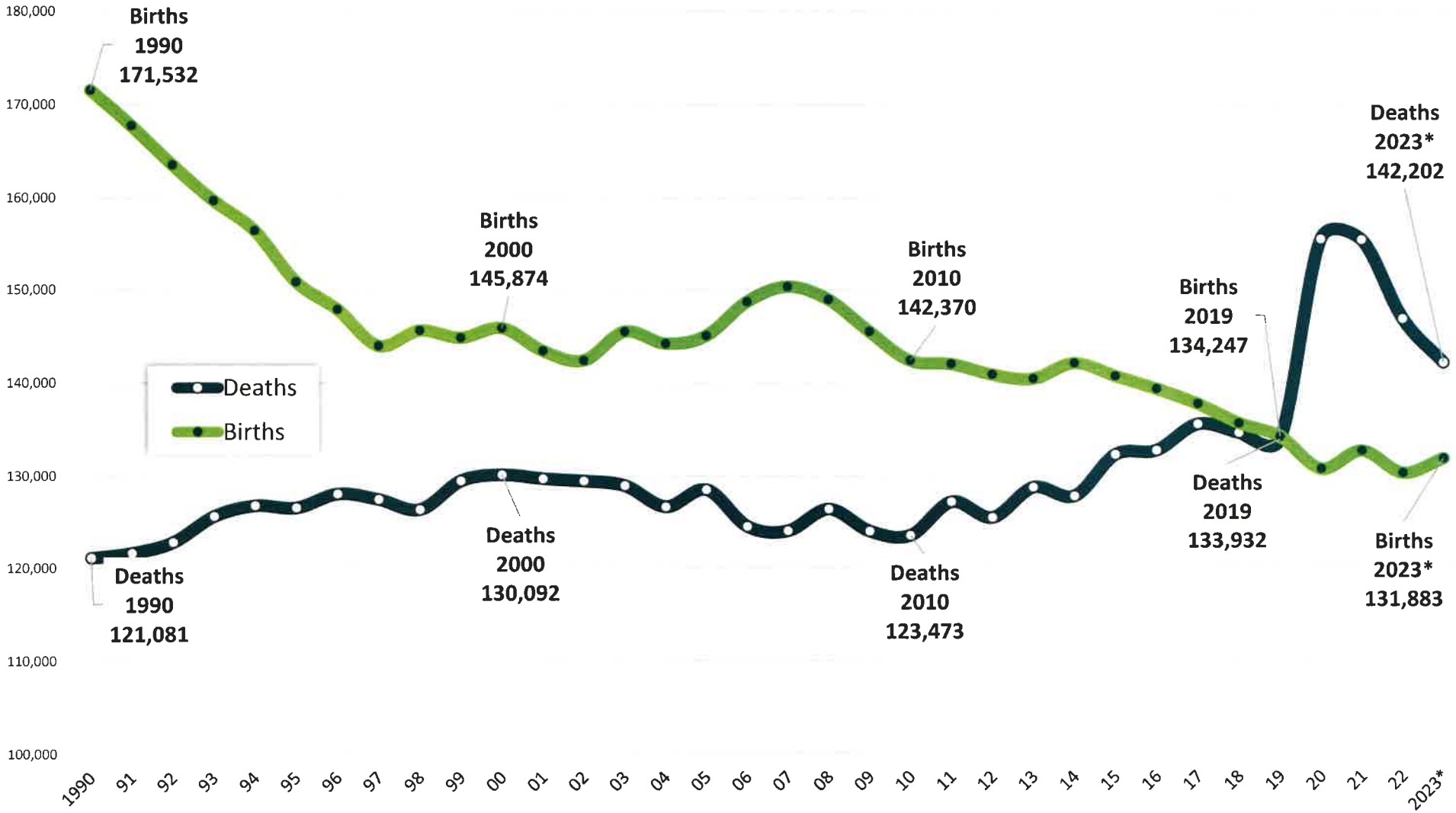




Center for RURAL Pennsylvania

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Pennsylvania State Data Center.

Number of Births and Deaths in Pennsylvania, 1990 to 2023*

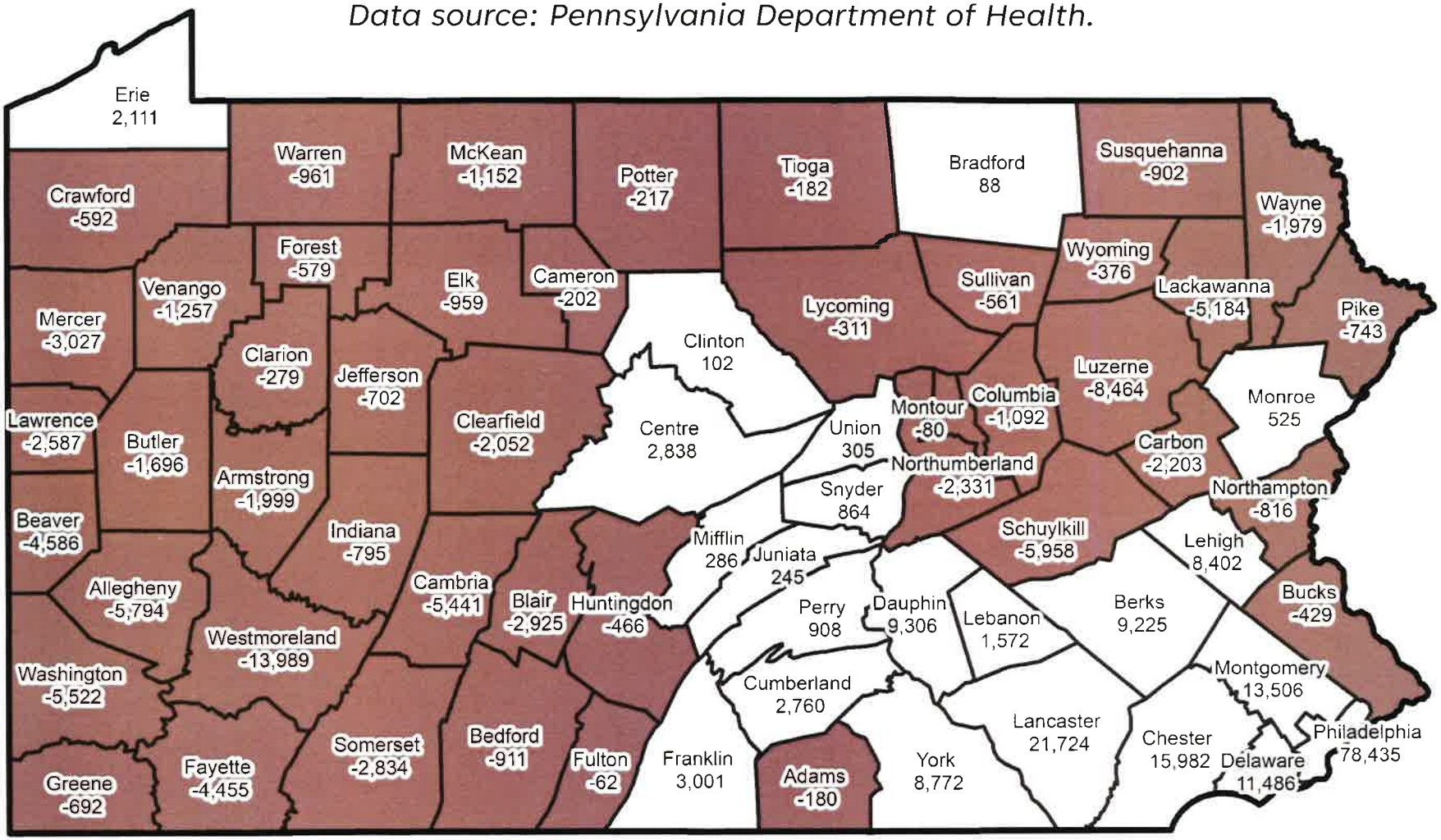


*2023 Births and Deaths are Projections by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.
Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Health.

RURAL Pennsylvania

Natural Population Change (Births Minus Deaths) by County, 2010 to 2019

Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Health.

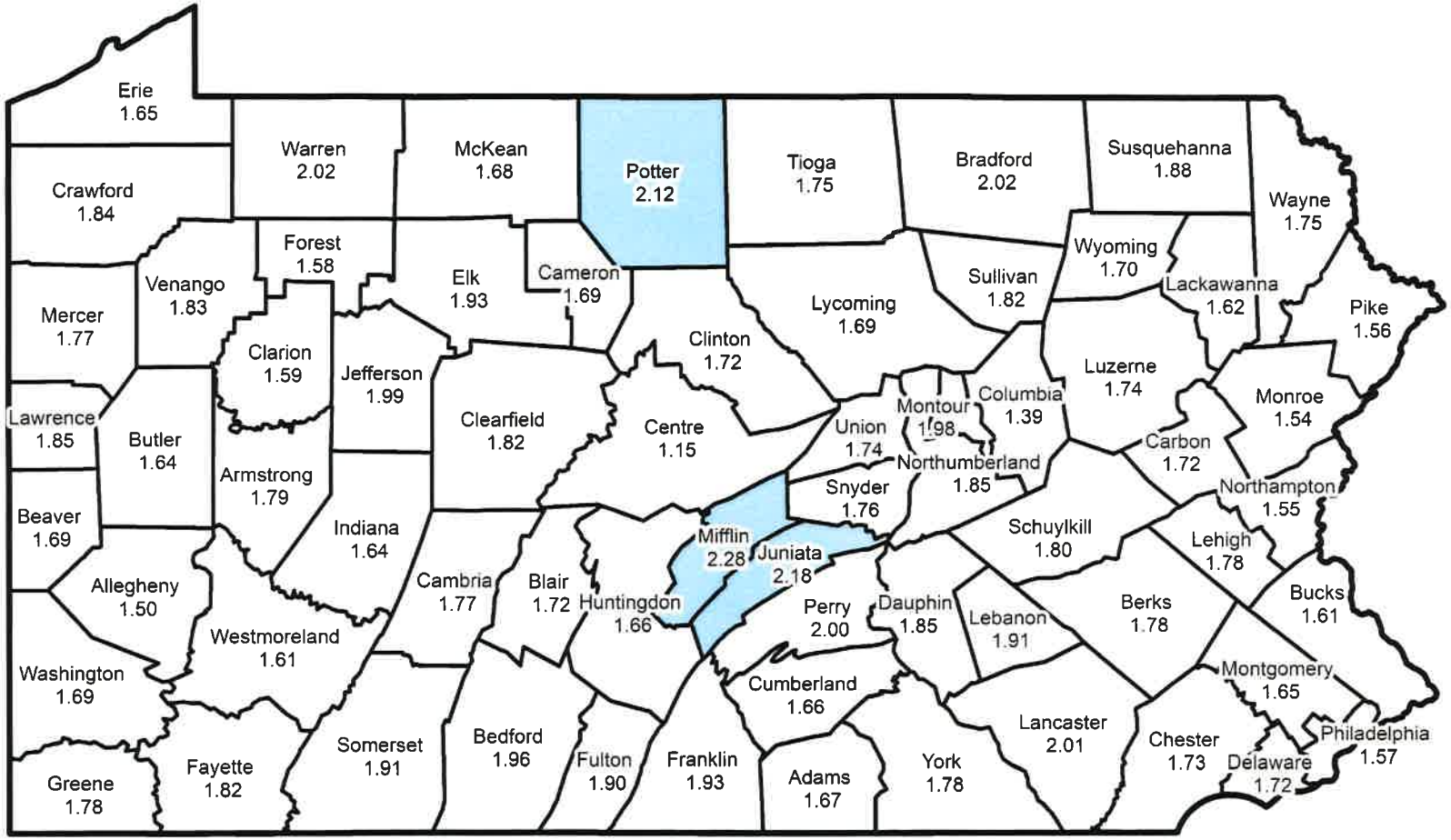


More Deaths than Births (Neg. Natural Change)

More Births than Deaths (Pos. Natural Change)

Center for RURAL Pennsylvania

Total Fertility Rates by County, 2016-2020



Total Fertility Rate Replacement Level = 2.10+

- Below Replacement Level
- At or Above Replacement Level

According to the CDC, the total fertility rate (TFR) estimates the number of births that a hypothetical group of women would have over their lifetimes, based on age-specific birth rates in a given year. Replacement level for the TFR is the level at which a given generation can exactly replace itself (generally considered to be 2.1 births per woman). Data for Pennsylvania counties are for women aged 15 to 44 years old. Data sources: Pennsylvania Department of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Top Five States with the Highest Total Fertility Rates, 2016 to 2020

1. South Dakota = 2.13
2. Utah = 2.05
3. North Dakota = 2.03
4. Nebraska = 2.02
5. Alaska = 1.99

...

39. Pennsylvania = 1.67

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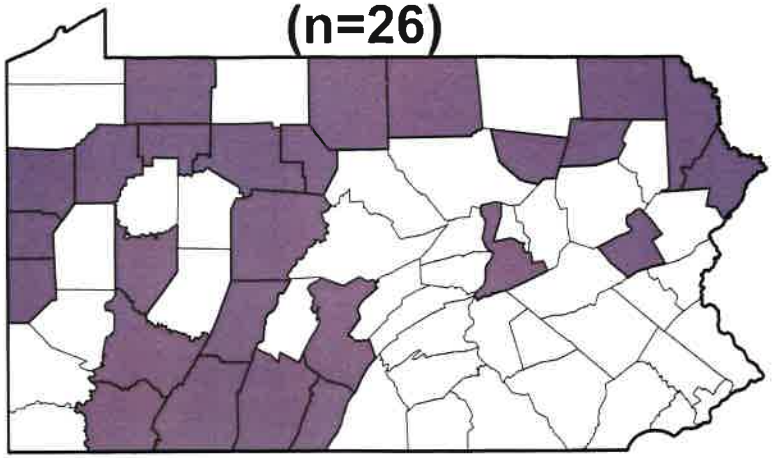
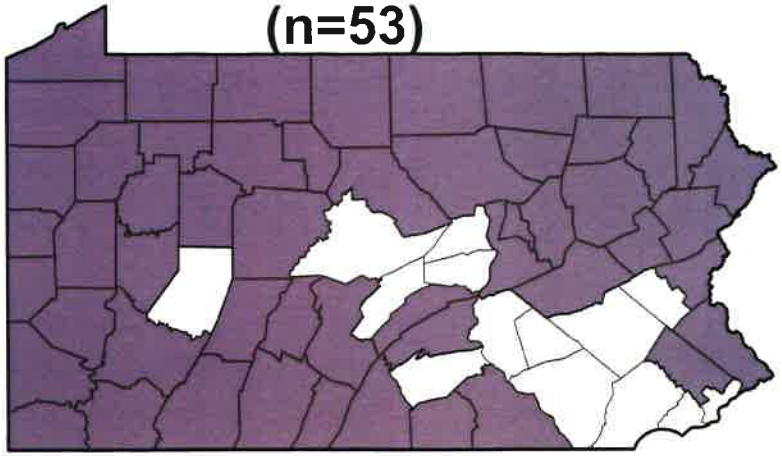
Counties With More People 65+ Than People <20 Years Old

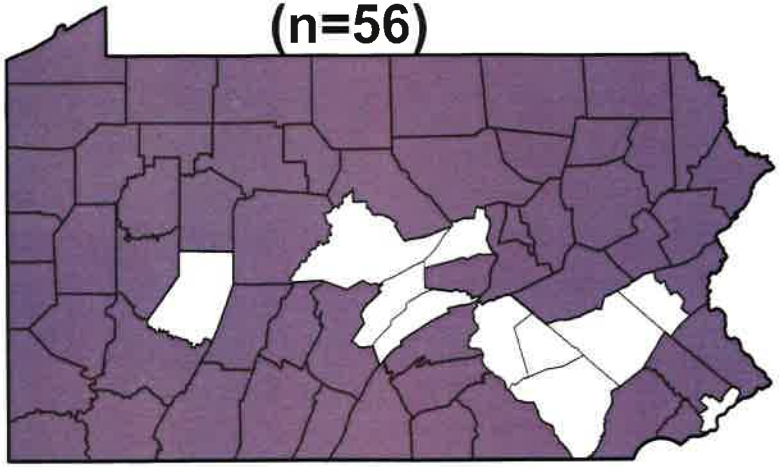
2020
(n=26)



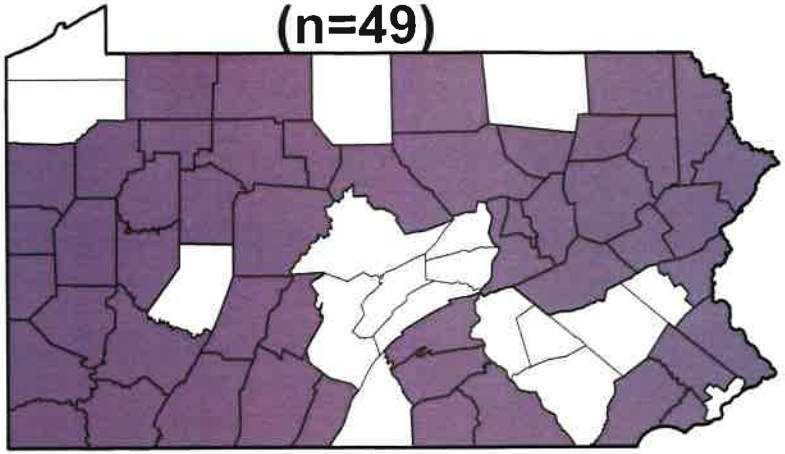
2030 (proj.)
(n=53)



2040 (proj.)
(n=56)



2050 (Proj.)
(n=49)



Data sources: U.S. Census Bureau and the Pennsylvania State Data Center.

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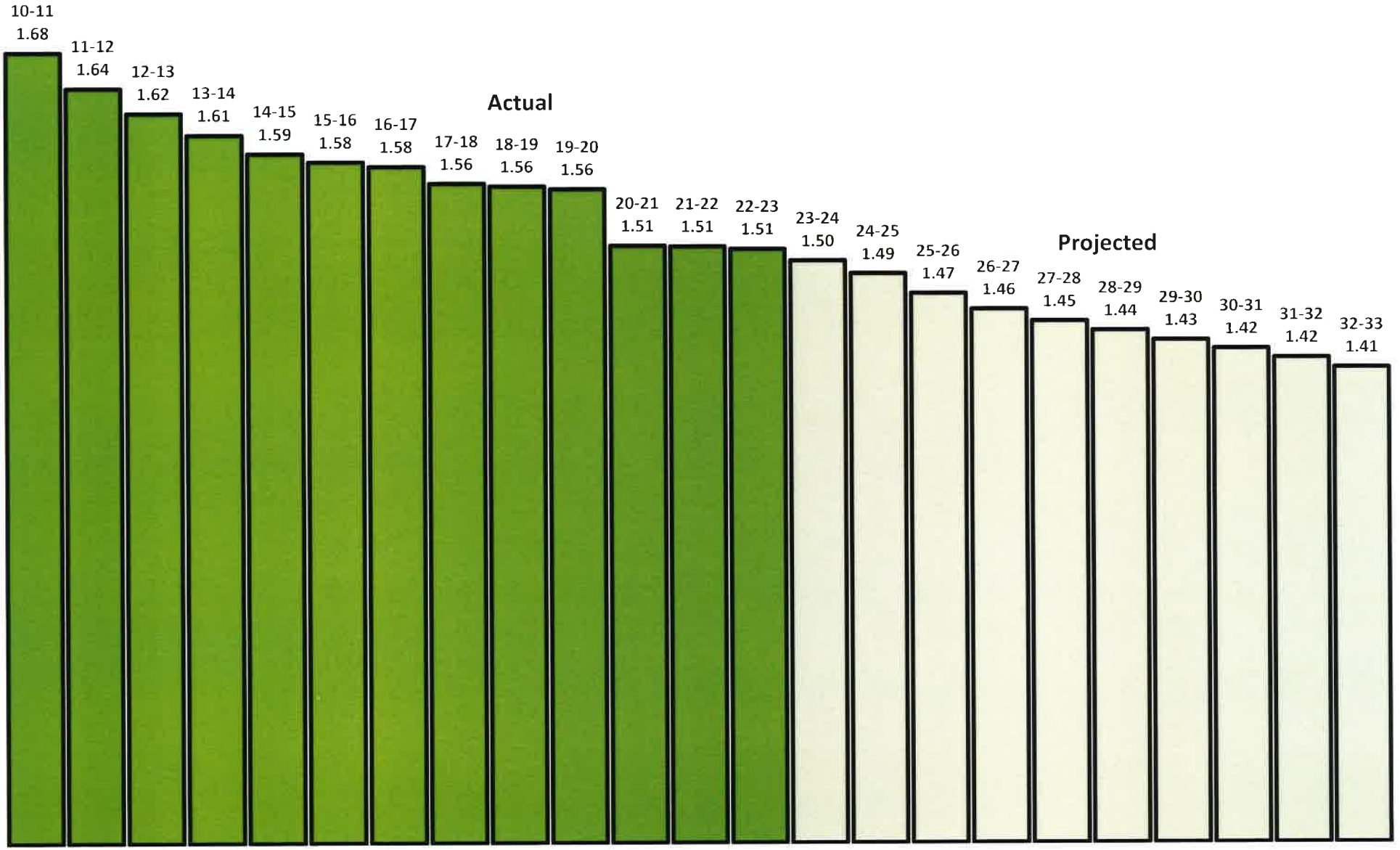
Impact of Population Change on Enrollment

Projected Statewide School District Enrollment, 2010-11 to 2032-33

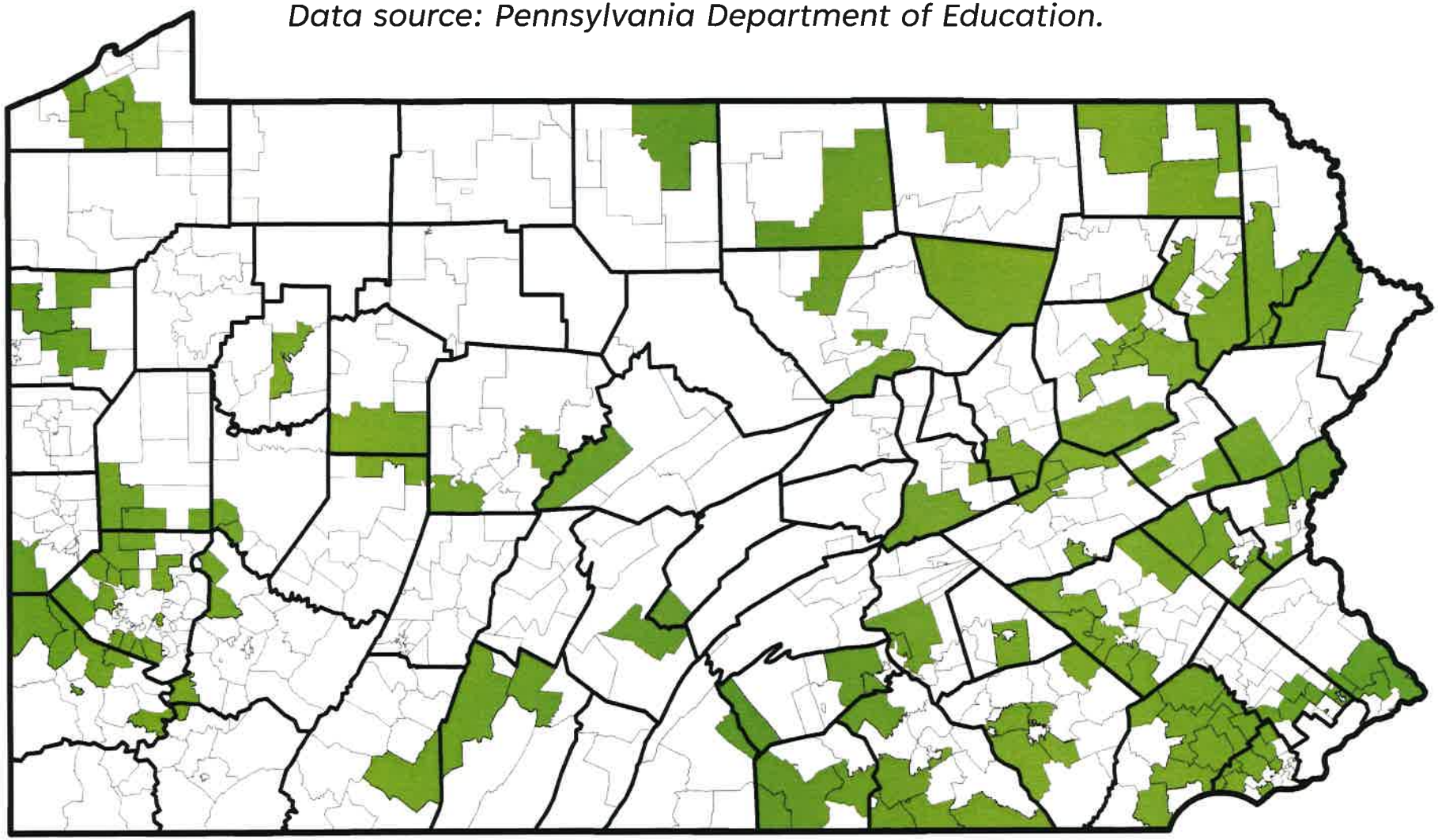
(In millions)

Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Education.



Projected Change in Enrollment by School District, 2022-23 to 2032-33

Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Education.



Statewide Change in Enrollment, 2022-23 to 2032-33 (proj.) = -6.7%

Decrease or No Change in Enrollment Increase in Enrollment

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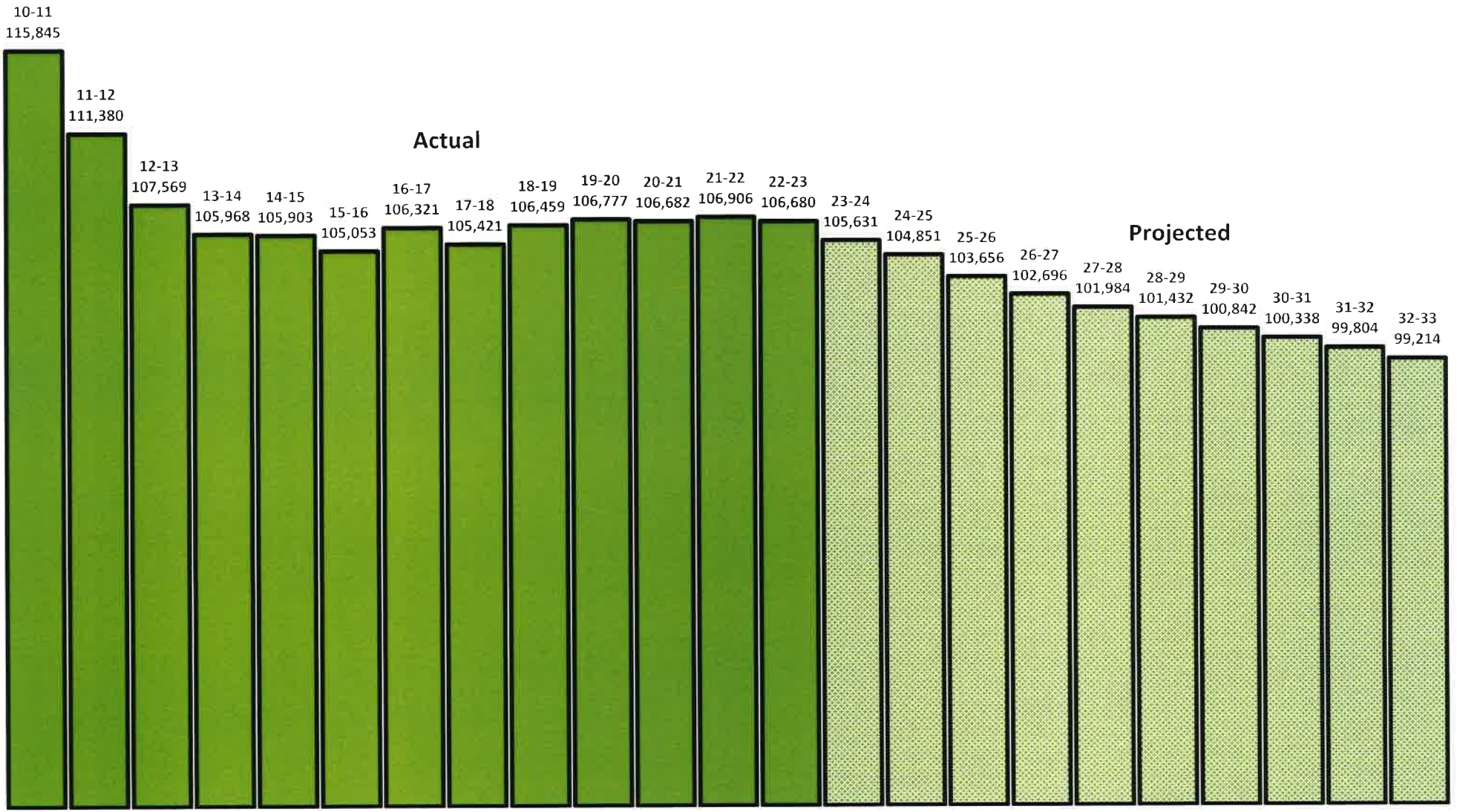
Impact of Population Change on Teacher Demand

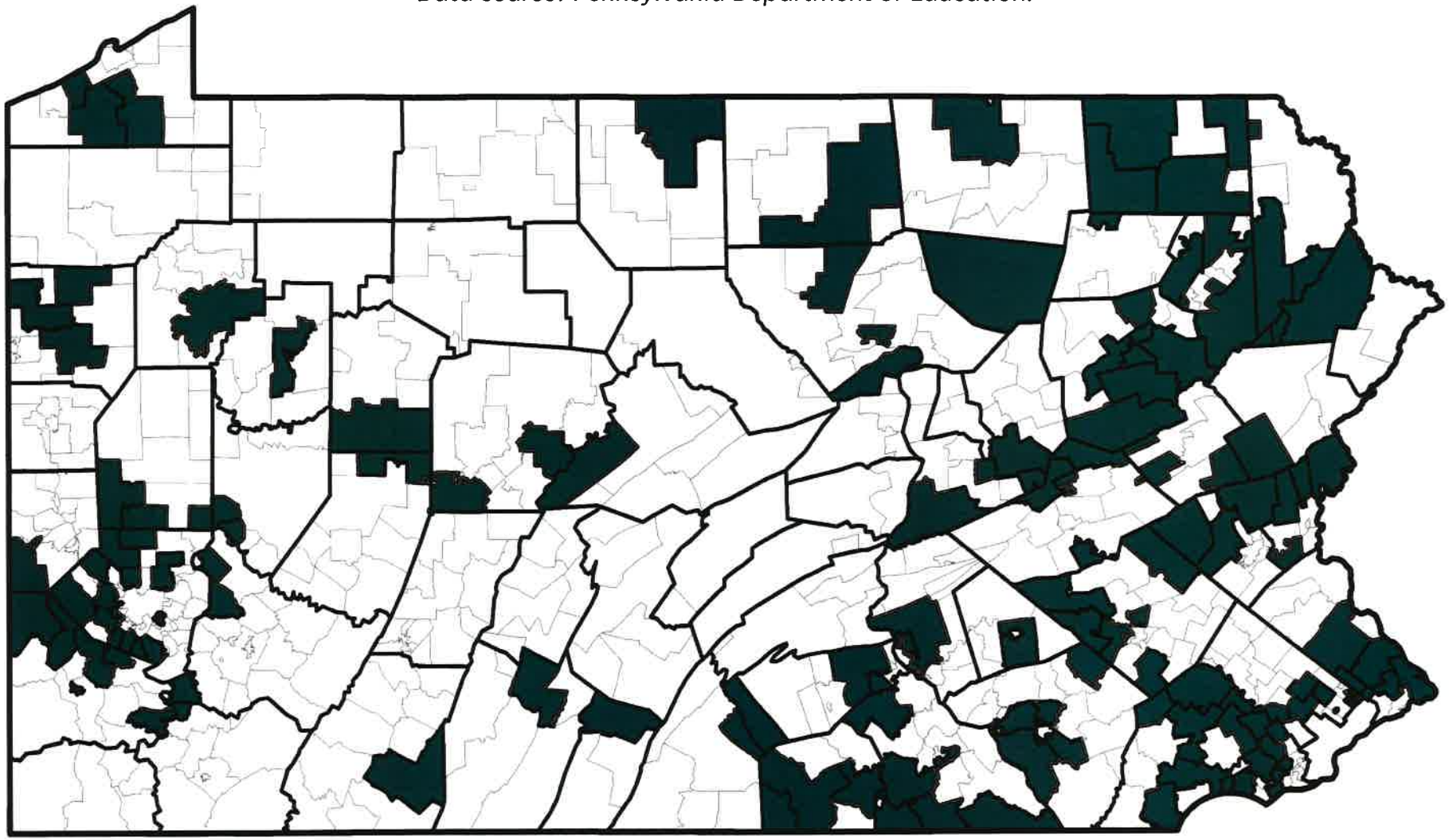
Projected Demand for Classroom Teachers, 2010-11 to 2032-33

The projections are based on the three-year average student teacher ratio, 2020-21 to 2022-23.
Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Education.



Projected Change in Classroom Teachers by School District, 2022-23 to 2032-33

The projections are based on the three-year average student teacher ratio, 2020-21 to 2022-23.
Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Education.



Statewide Change in Classroom Teachers, 2022-23 to 2032-33 (proj.) = -7.0%

Decrease or No Change Increase

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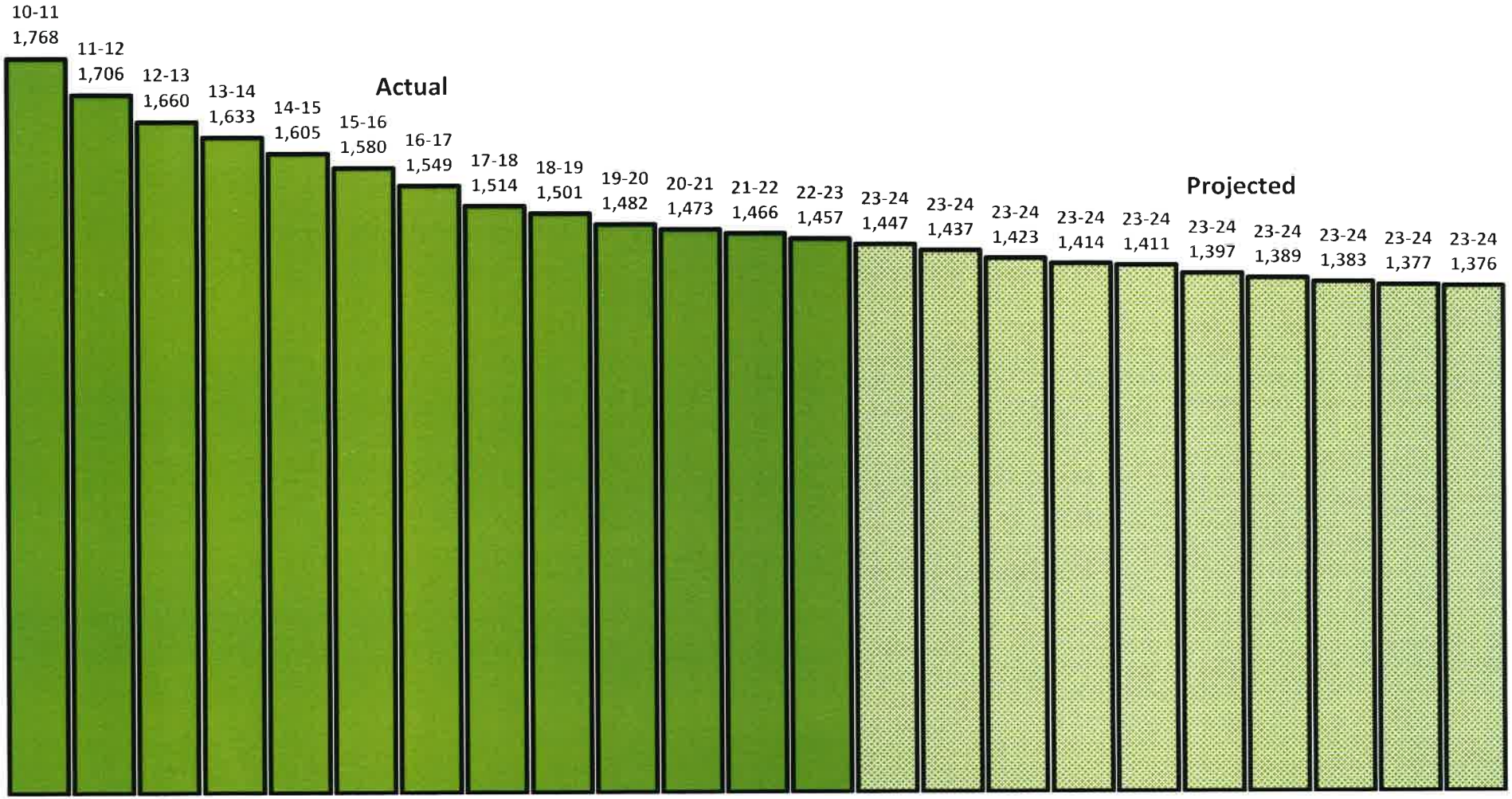
Impact of Population Change on School Buildings

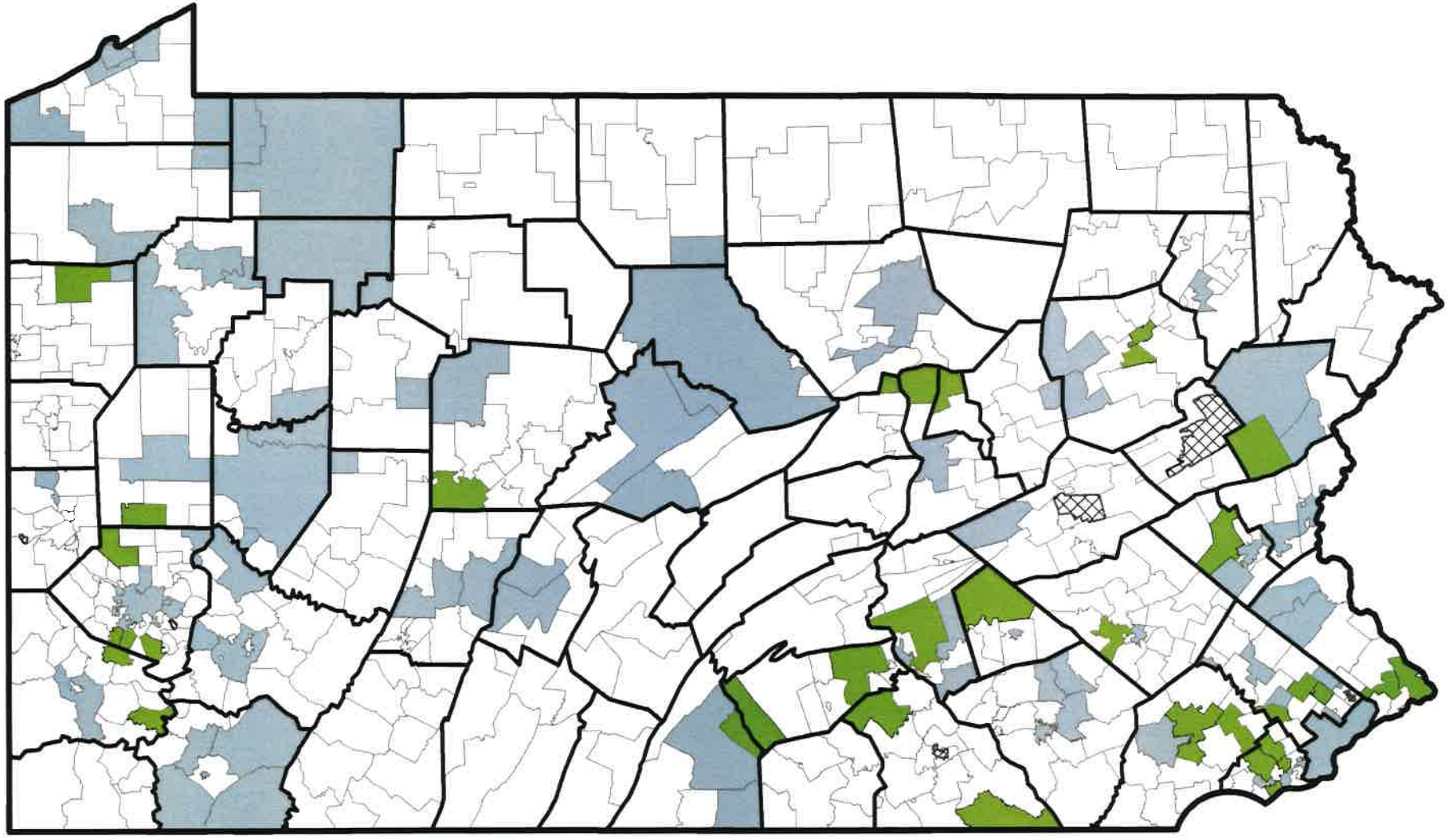
Projected Demand for Elementary School Buildings, 2010-11 to 2032-33

The projections are based on the three-year ratio of average elementary students (grades K-6) to elementary school buildings. 2020-21 to 2022-23. The schools include only those school buildings classified as elementary by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Excluded are school buildings that are classified as both elementary and secondary school buildings. Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Education.



Projected Change in Elementary School Buildings by School District, 2022-23 to 2032-33

The projections are based on the three-year ratio of average elementary students (grades K-6) to elementary school buildings. 2020-21 to 2022-23. The schools include only those school buildings classified as elementary by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Excluded are school buildings that are classified as both elementary and secondary school buildings. Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Education.



Statewide Change in Elementry School Buildings, 2022-23 to 2032-33 (proj.) = -5.5%

Decrease
Increase
No Change
Could Not be Projected

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Conclusion

This is a long-term trend, and it is unlikely to change in the near term.

There are significant regional differences in population changes.

In the future, Pennsylvania will likely need fewer teachers and school buildings.

Pennsylvania is not alone.

Center for RURAL Pennsylvania

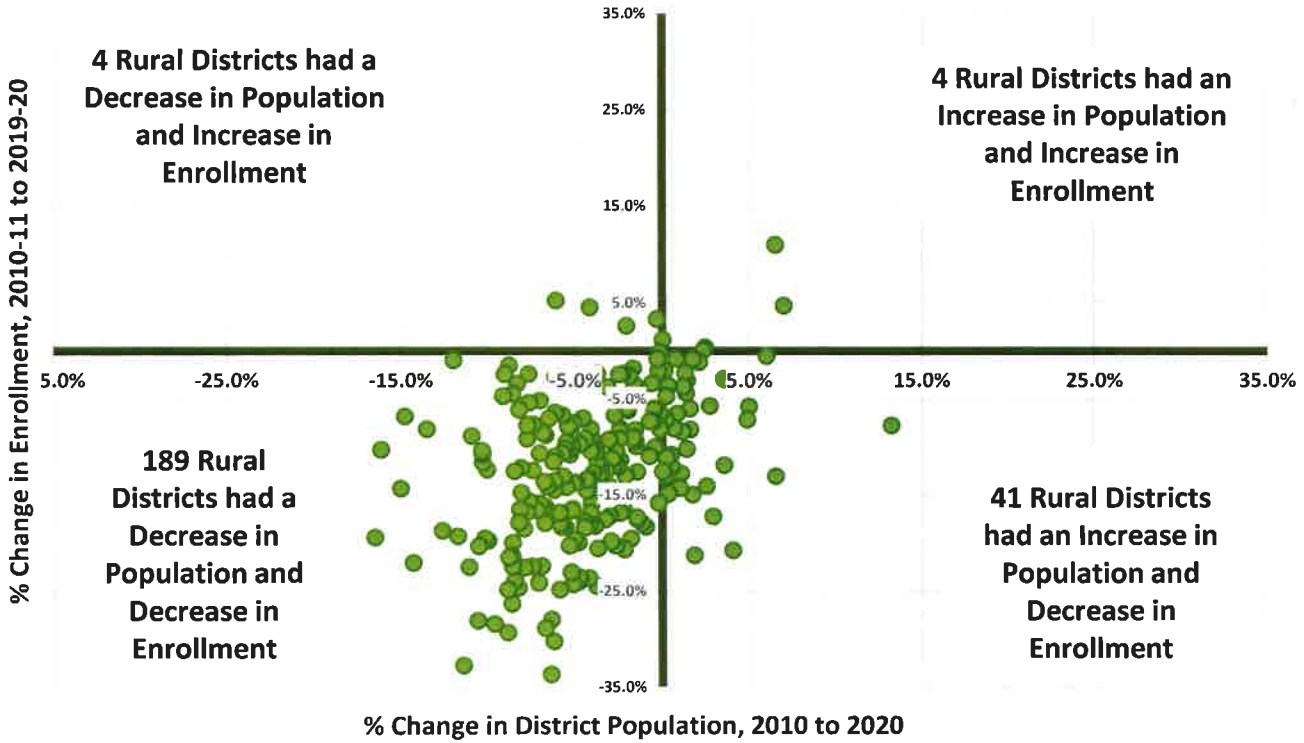
A LEGISLATIVE AGENCY OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

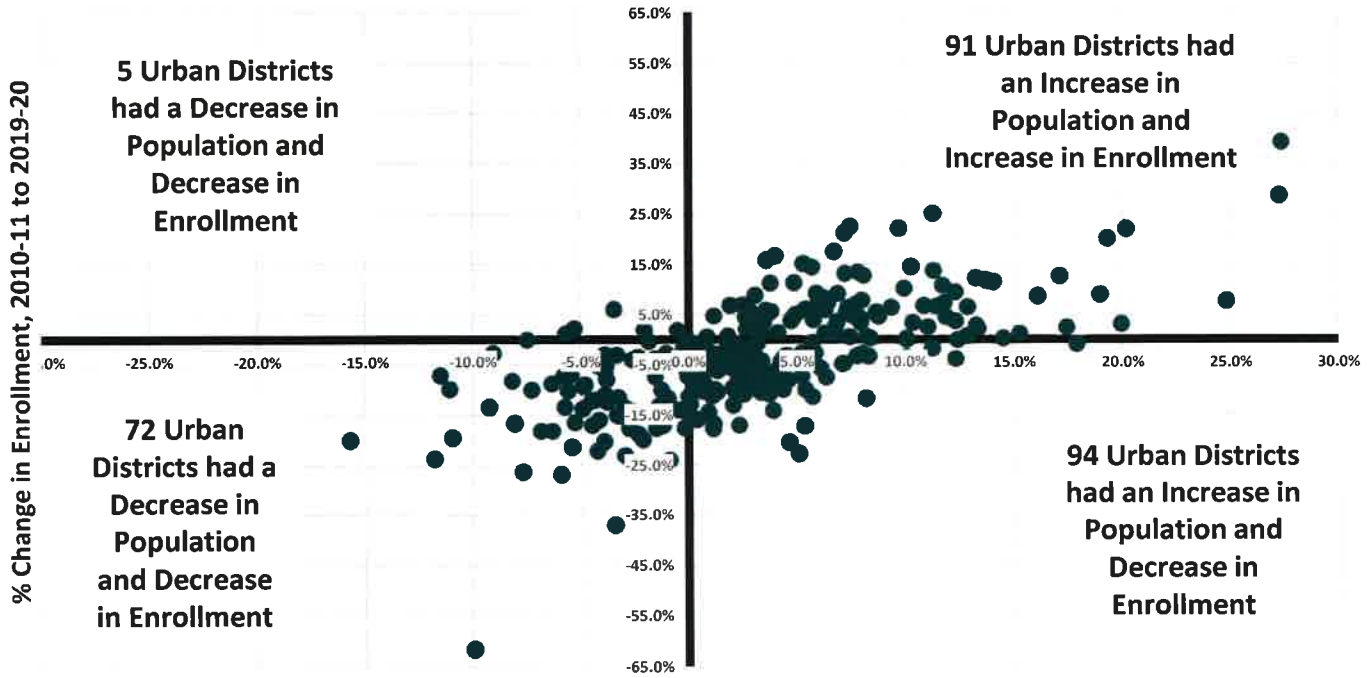
Thank You

Dr. Kyle C. Kopko, Executive Director, kkopko@rural.pa.gov

Appendix: Supplemental Material

Relationship Between Population Change and Enrollment Change in Rural and Urban School Districts





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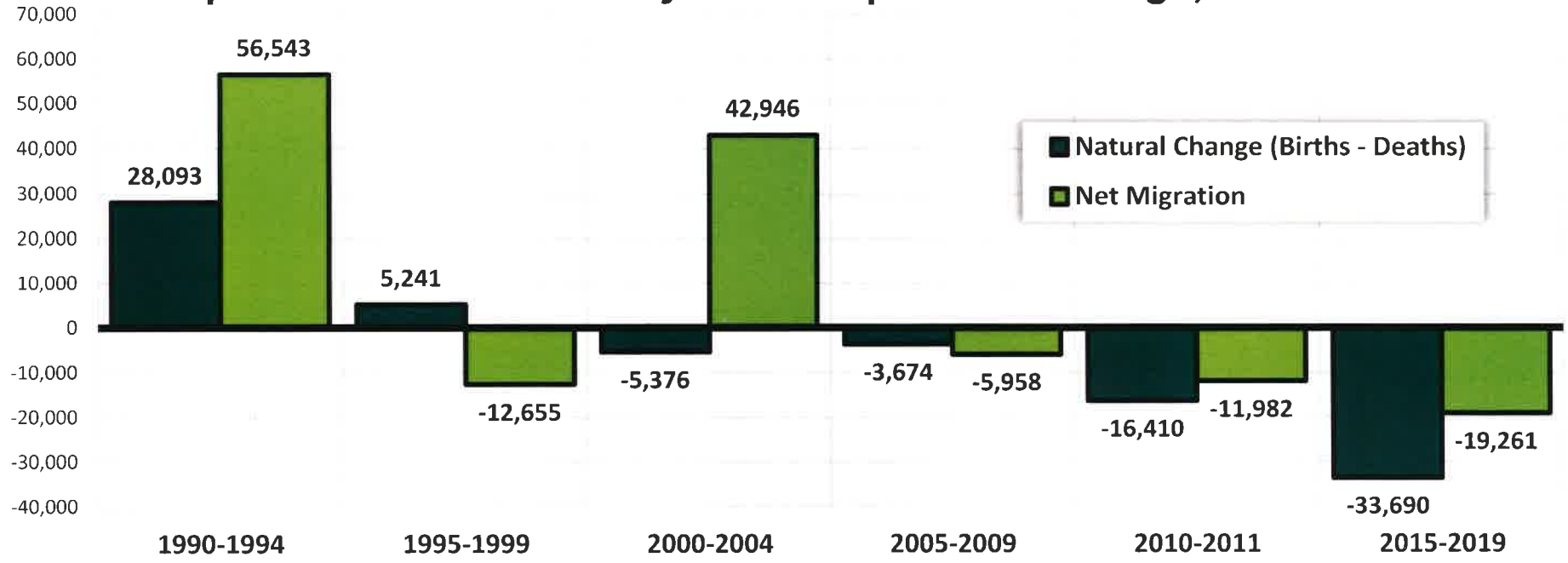
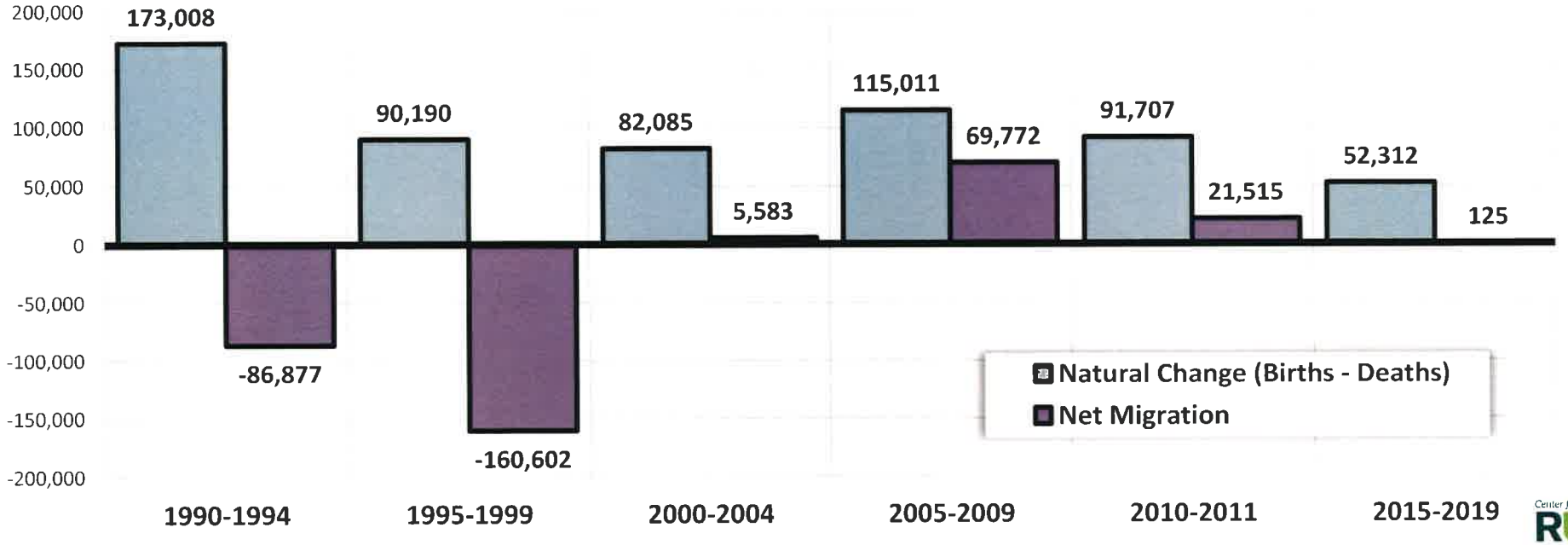
Data sources: Small Area Income and U.S. Census Bureau and Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Components of Rural Pennsylvania Population Change, 1990 to 2019



Components of Urban Pennsylvania Population Change, 1990 to 2019



Net Migration are estimates. Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Health.

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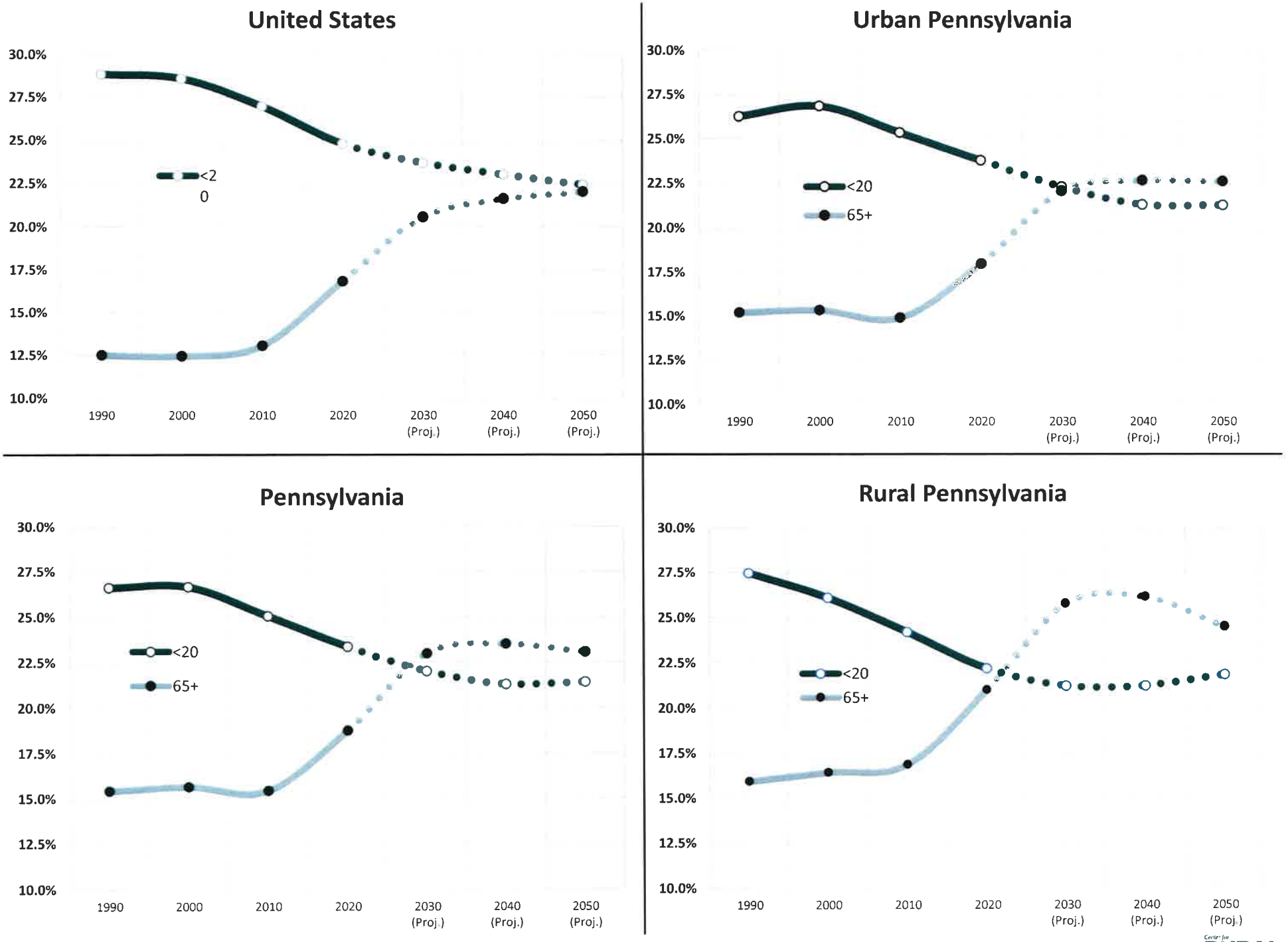
Percent of Under 20 Years Old and 65 Years Old and Older



Data source: U.S. Census and Pennsylvania State Data Center.

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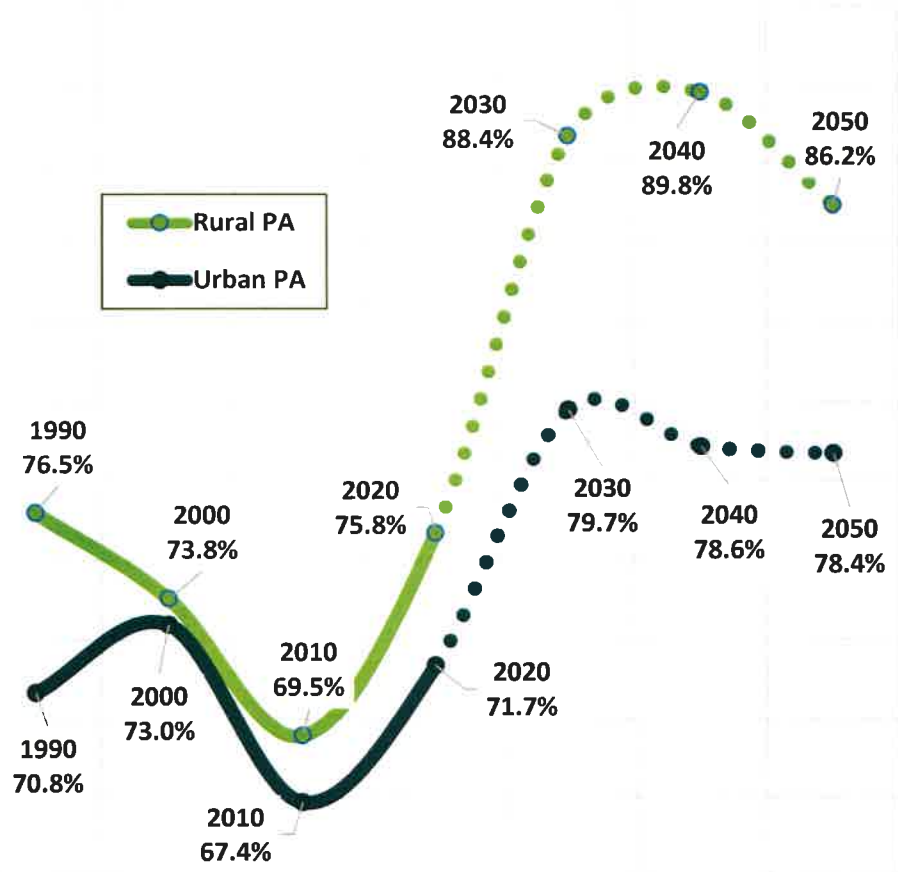
Age Dependency Ratios, 1990 to 2050 *(Projected)*

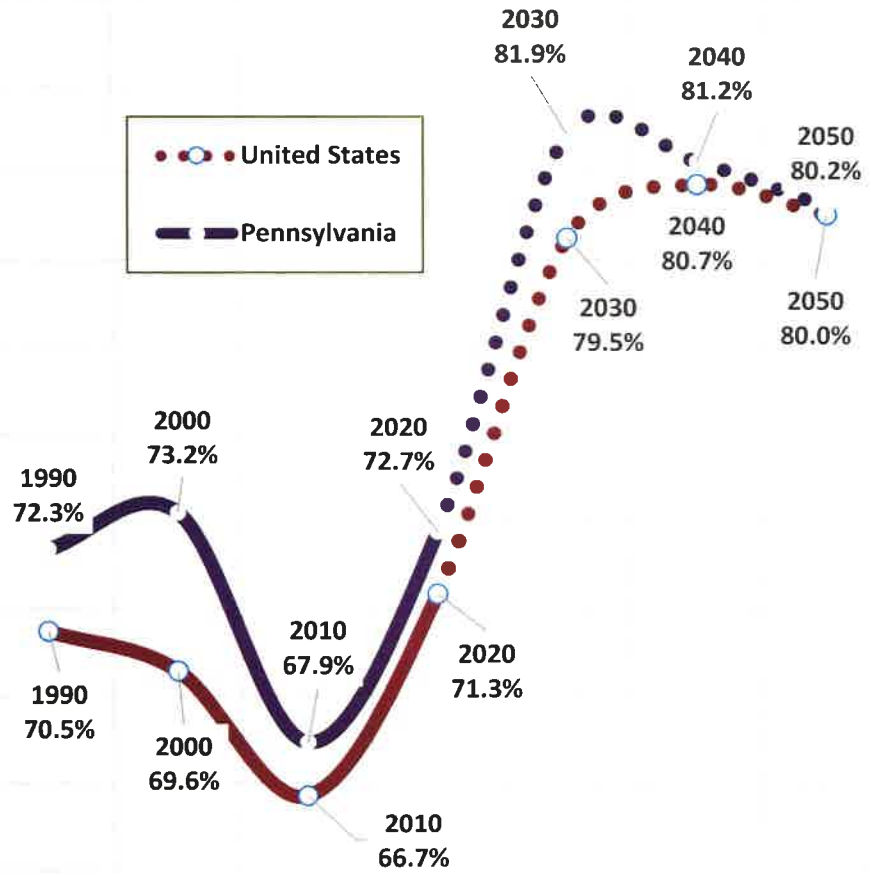
Age Dependency Ratio Formula

$$\frac{\text{Population <20 Years Old + Population 65+ Years Old}}{\text{Population 20 to 64 Years Old}}$$

Rural and Urban Pennsylvania



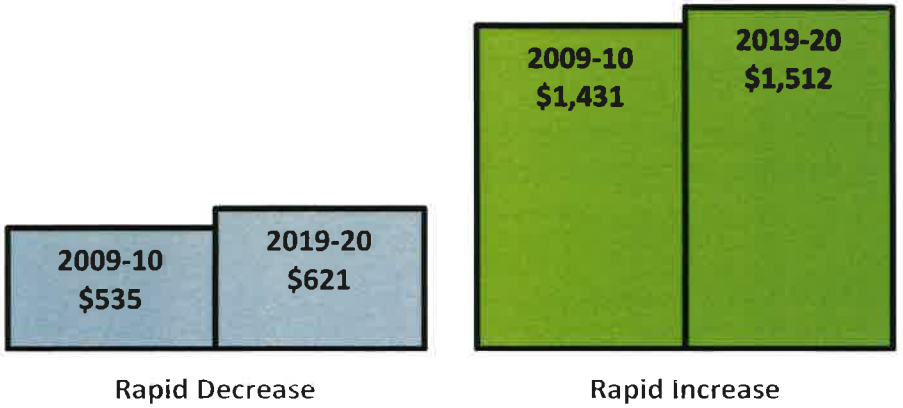
Pennsylvania and United States



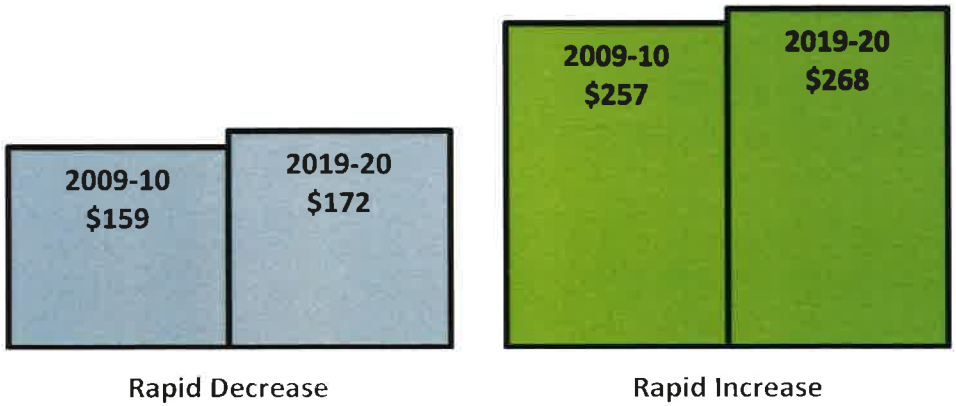
Data sources: U.S. Census Bureau and the Pennsylvania State Data Center.

Center for RURAL Pennsylvania

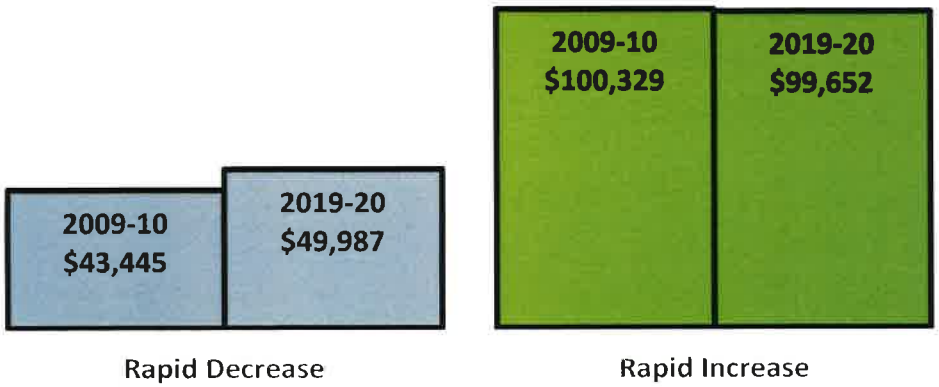
Real Estate Taxes Per Capita



Non-Property Taxes per Capita



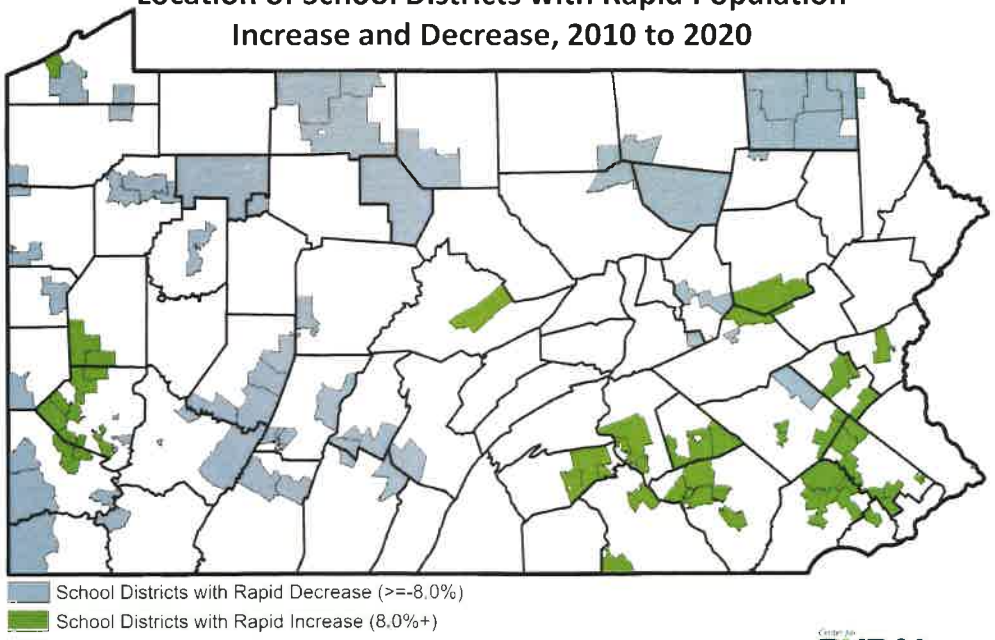
Market Values per Capita



Comparisons of School Districts with 8% or More Decrease and 8% or More Increase in Population, 2010 to 2020

Rapid Decline are the 51 school districts that had an 8% or more decrease in population and rapid increase are the 52 districts that had an 8% or more increase in population, 2010 to 2020. Data source: Pennsylvania Department of Education and U.S. Census Bureau. All financial data adjusted for inflation with 2020=100.

Location of School Districts with Rapid Population Increase and Decrease, 2010 to 2020



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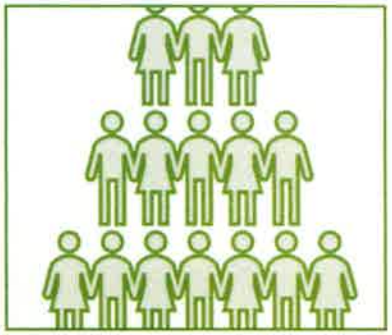
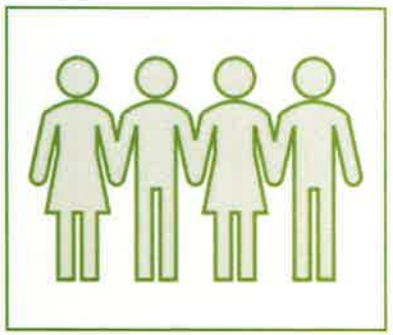
Population Profile of School Districts with Rapid Decrease and Rapid Increase in Population, 2010 to 2020



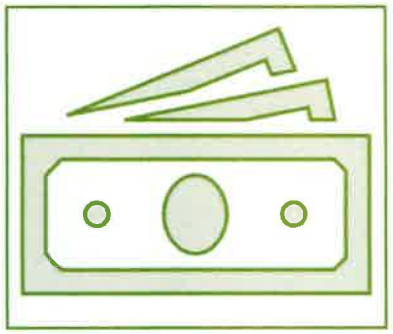
Avg. Population
Rapid Decrease = 9,114
Rapid Increase = 37,129

% Population 65+
Rapid Decrease = 21%
Rapid Increase = 18%



% Population of Color
Decrease = 13%
Increase = 21%

Poverty Rate Rapid
Decrease = 15%
Rapid Increase = 6%



Avg. Household Income Rapid
Decrease = $67,200
Rapid Increase = $117,900

Avg. Home Value
Rapid Decreasing = $149,000
Rapid Increasing = $309,500

% Adults Bachelor's Degree+
Rapid Decrease = 21%
Rapid Increase = 43%

Households with No Internet
Rapid Decrease = 17%
Rapid Increase = 7%

Data sources: 2021, 5-year Average, American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Center for RURAL Pennsylvania

Testimony to the Basic Education Funding Commission
Thomas A. Butler, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8
November 9, 2023

Good morning, Chair Sturla, Chair Phillips-Hill, and members of the Basic Education Funding Commission. Thank you for allowing me to talk with you today about the importance of shared services as it relates to funding a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education in Pennsylvania. My name is Tom Butler, and I currently serve as the Executive Director of Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8. As the name implies, Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 (IU8) serves four rural counties (Bedford, Blair, Somerset, and Cambria) and 35 school districts covering 3500 square miles. IU8 is the second-largest Intermediate Unit in Pennsylvania in terms of both geography, and the number of school districts served.

A situation rarely arises that allows policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to consider decisions as if we are living in the future. This is the opportunity the Commission has as we sit here in November of 2023. The decisions and recommendations you make now will affect the year 2036 when our current class of Kindergarten students graduate from our schools and enter the workforce, college, or other pursuits. Approaching the problem of giving all students a meaningful opportunity to succeed must be viewed through the lens of our kindergarten students when they graduate in 2036. What do they need to succeed? What do the schools need to help them succeed? Most importantly, what do our communities need to make possible the potential of all our Pennsylvania students?

Today's topic is the importance of shared services among school districts as you consider what school funding looks like in the year 2036. My experience, and the experience of the 35 school districts in IU8, is that sharing of resources is essential for providing high-quality

IU8 programs and services reached 32,343 students and 17,303 adults in the IU8 region. Considering that the total student population in IU8 is approximately 46,000, the impact is significant. However, those numbers only tell a partial story, and the rest of the story is vital for the topic of shared services.

You can place all of the programs and services of an IU into three buckets:

1. Programs and services for which school districts pay the IU,
2. Programs and services that are at no cost to the districts because of State or Federal funds that "flow-through" the IU, and
3. Programs and services that are no cost to the district because of competitive grants the IU's have won.

In IU8, when you consider these three buckets, the numbers tell a story of high impact and capacity building. Of the 32,692 students who received programs and services through IU8, 24,343 received those programs and services at no cost to the school districts. In adult professional development, of the 17,303 adults who received some professional development from IU8, 11,309 individuals received the professional development at no cost to the school districts.

The role of Intermediate Units is to serve as an "intermediary" between PDE and the school districts. Each IU fulfills this role by building capacity among (and for) school districts. In other words, you are seeing the effect of the decision made in 1970 by the General Assembly to create a system of support to help build and maintain capacity within all of Pennsylvania school districts.

contemporary system of public education. These grassroots efforts reflect the different contexts in which each school district finds themselves. Sometimes, answers to complex problems come from think tanks, professional organizations, and policymakers. However, these "top-down" solutions must be coupled with "bottom-up" solutions that reflect local context.

Recommendations and Conclusions

It seems reasonable to assume that purposefully encouraging grassroots solutions to the education funding issue should be considered. Our school boards and school leaders are already working on solutions to these problems around shared services. I recommend the Commission consider three actions to encourage (and deepen) shared services:

1. Fund feasibility studies for school districts that are interested in integration.
2. Provide funding for school districts to upgrade facilities and other infrastructure that encourage shared services.
3. Allocate funds through the Intermediate Unit's "statement of work" system to leverage shared services and capacity building among school districts.